etch MAGAZINE

volume 5 Issue 3

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Quebec
Montreal
Ottawa
Huron
Toronto
Lake Ontario
Boston
York

Ruth's Hat

Skunk Anasie

Jets To Brazil

Fear Factory

Man or Astroman?

Plus

June Carter Cash > Mike Ireland > Galactic Cowboys

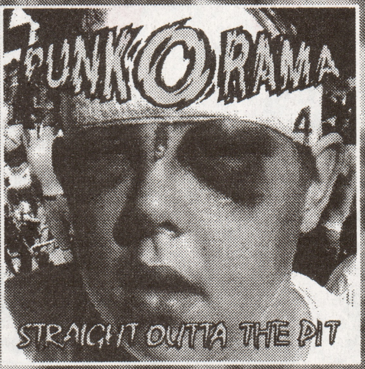
STRAIGHT OUTTA THE PIT

THE BOUNCING SOULS
HOPELESS ROMANTIC

PENNYWISE
STRAIGHT AHEAD

STRAIGHT FACED
CONDITIONED

AGNOSTIC FRONT
SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE


PUNK-O-RAMA
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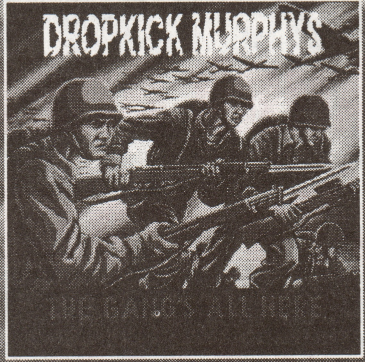
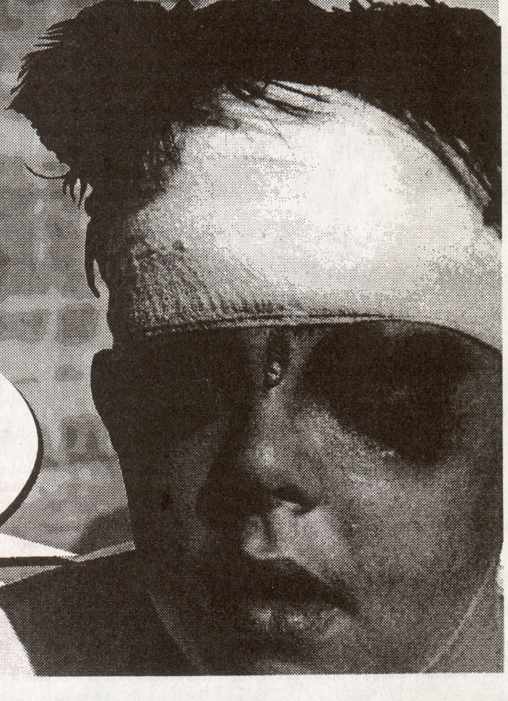
STRAIGHT OUTTA THE PIT

SUICIDAL TENDENCIES

VANS
WARPED TOUR '99
www.warpedtour.com


DROPKICK MURPHYS
THE GANG'S ALL HERE


SEE ALL THESE BANDS AT WARPED TOUR '99 AND DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT THE NEW EPITAPH TENT... SEE YA IN DA PIT!!!

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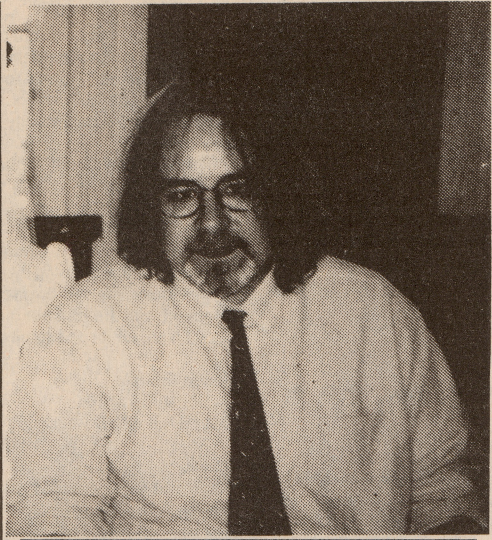
FEATURES
It's Only Rock 'n Roll by Bob Toole
A Short History Of New Red Archives
The Smack Down Hotel by D. Wood

On the cover: RUTH'S HAT
Layout: Rachael Overmyer



EDITOR'S RANT

It's been awhile since the last issue [we're about a month late – doh!], so most of what I wanted to talk about, is now on the verge of being irrelevant. That being said, have you noticed recently that there have been a number of violent incidents / crimes, involving young people. In a lot of these cases "Goth kids" were blamed or implicated because they and their friends were alienated as freaks in school because of their tastes in fashion, lifestyle and "look." I know that in some cases, the charges turned out to be true. This invariably leads to generalizations on the part of the mainstream media [and the tabloids]. The pattern is always alike: a young person commits or participates in an extremely heinous crime and the public is inundated, minute by minute, by the media [esp. cable news] with the minutiae of the crime. Information and speculation points in the direction of someone involved in the latest "rebellious youth" trend [gangsta rap, Goth, punk, Oi]. Everyone connected with the suspect is also branded and, before anyone notices, each member of that group is a pariah. In the past it was hippies, then punks / skins and today it's Goths. As times change and each generation of children become older and atrocities occur, parents blame these groups. Do today's parents blame their children's bad behavior on bands and / or fashion trends to assuage the guilt they feel for *their* deficiencies in parenting? Should they cite the failures on today's schools? It's always easier to blame some person or group than it is to honestly look at ourselves. In their eyes it's not parenting or lousy public education, but rather its bands and videos and video games and Hollywood and blah-blah-blah. Using scapegoats is much easier on the conscience than finding ways to rectify things. It's not the clothes, music, movies or video games that cause the feelings of dislocation, loneliness and, in some cases, rage of today's youth. It's the apathy of their parents, the lack of quality time spent together as a family and the absence of meaningful dialogue between family members. Blaming the ills of our children on Marilyn Manson or gangsta rap, etc. only serves to exacerbate things.

-- Norman Zebrowski

ETCH
magazine

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Norman Zebrowski @ ETCH

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1/6 page	$40	$60
1/4 page	$50	$75
1/2 page	$100	$150
Full page	$200	$300
Covers	$225	$350

Vent

Subj.: what did we do wrong?
From: punk4dummies@juno.com (Gregg Smith)

Why is it that punk is always getting beaten on in your reviews? Is punk doing that bad? I don't wish to criticize your reviews but, don't some of the bands deserve some credit for what they do? One last question; why is death / grind / black metal so popular now?

Merci,
Smitty

[Call (810)783-7740 or e-mail punk4dummies@juno.com for info about P F D. Ask for Smitty]

Smitty,
We're not trying to be "anti-punk," in fact the roots of the magazine can be traced to some of the earliest days in the punk rock scene, as far back as '80 and '81. The majority of our writers who review the punk releases we get are themselves members of various punk bands. We feel this adds to the veracity of the reviews.

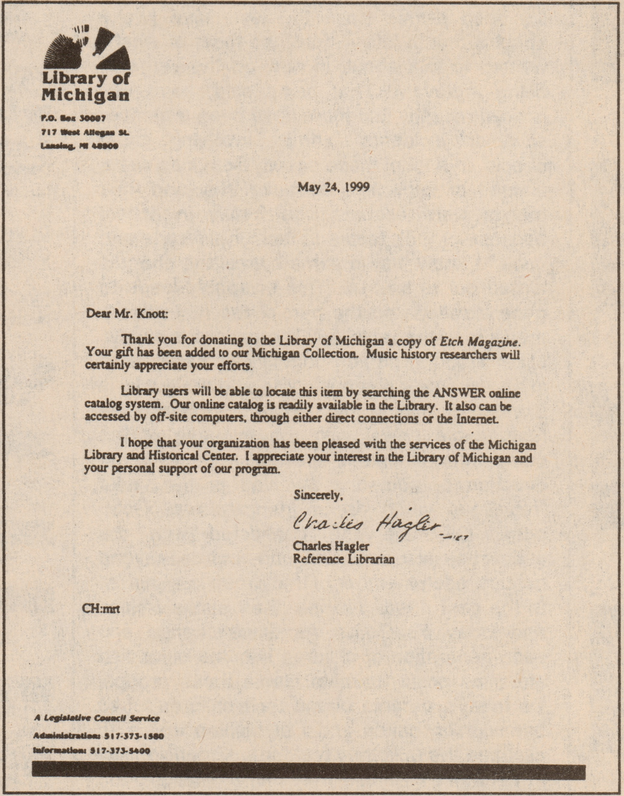
As for all the metal, it seems that every indie metal label has finally found us [after five years], so we're getting deluged by them. I, too, find it disconcerting about the amount of ink we're giving to the metal scene. However, we don't want to cut 'em because our policy has always been to review any / all records, 7"s, CDs, tapes and 'zines that indie labels, etc. send us. The only stuff we cut on a regular basis is major label crap. Our next issue should be crammed with p-rock, so keep an eye out for it [in mid-to-late May]. Ok? Hope we haven't let you [or our other regular readers] down with the amount of space we've given metal bands lately. Keep the faith and, please, keep on reading. -- N Z

Subject: DRUMS FOR PEACE
From: grumpyfuch@hotmail.com (anna balka)

We are tired of the anger, the hate, and the violence so it's time we make some noise. What do you say. I don't know how to really say it but I'm sick of the Matthew Sheppards, sick of the Columbine Highs, sick of the brutality, the racism, sexism, homophobia, sick of just people being treated in an uncivilized manner just because of some dumb difference. I'm not saying that we all just get along with fake politically correct plastic smiley faces. What I'm saying is let's grow up as a human race, deal with it, acknowledge and move and just plain get over it. So on July 1 I'm gonna play my drums. Because that's all I know how to do is play my drums. I wish you could join me wherever you are whatever you're doing STOP and bang on something besides someone else for a change. So, at 3 o'clock pm please play with me on whatever can make some noise pots, pans anything. So please pass the word around, post flyers just whatever. It doesn't have to be anything organized just go to a park and start playing your drums. maybe at your school you could play your drums. Maybe in your cities trendy cruising area you could play your drums. Go to the beach. sit in your house.

Please play

Anna



Library of
Michigan
P.O. Box 30007
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Lansing, MI 48909

May 24, 1999

Dear Mr. Knott:

Thank you for donating to the Library of Michigan a copy of *Etch Magazine*. Your gift has been added to our Michigan Collection. Music history researchers will certainly appreciate your efforts.

Library users will be able to locate this item by searching the ANSWER online catalog system. Our online catalog is readily available in the Library. It also can be accessed by off-site computers, through either direct connections or the Internet.

I hope that your organization has been pleased with the services of the Michigan Library and Historical Center. I appreciate your interest in the Library of Michigan and your personal support of our program.

Sincerely,

Charles Hagler
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Reference Librarian

CH:mrt

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Dear Etch Editors,

Hello, my name is Alisha Trimble. I'm studying fine arts at the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit. I picked up volume 5, number 1 of Etch somewhere sometime and I really liked it. I know I've seen your mag once or twice before-

Part of the reason I am writing is because of my position as a "young artist". I am looking for venues to do performance art / spoken word / installation. The obvious thing would be to talk to gallery owners in Pontiac or Birmingham, but my perception of the "art world" well, I think it's silly and destructive. I want to blur the lines between art / performance art and punk venues in general. Art needs to be witnessed and experienced by people or else it loses it's subversive power and therefore ceases to be art in my opinion.

Can you help me out? Are there any places I can go that aren't galleries that would be open to new genres? Would you be supportive of the beginning of such a scene in Detroit? I don't really know where to start with this, but I have so many ideas and enthusiasm for how I can get those ideas out, especially in Detroit because it's the perfect city for this kind of thing. Please write and let me know your take on this.

Also, I don't think you are reviewing 'zines anymore, are you? But here's a back issue of mine anyway. It's the only one I have right now-really emo and personal, sorry the copy's kind of weird, I had to steal copies from my work. Enjoy it, love it, throw it out, yeah.

As a reaction to Chris's review of the Sleater Kinney Show, well, too bad he blanked out the opening band Flin Flon because they're really fucking good and the singer looks like the boyfriend from that Roseanne TV Show. And I, too, was very annoyed with the mosher girl. Jeez...

That's all. I hope to hear from you soon. Keep up the good work.

Alisha Trimble
201 E. Kirby #1104
Detroit, MI 48202

Alisha,
Thank you for writing and your kind words! As for helping you with your performance art, I wouldn't know who to talk to here in L-town, but hopefully by publishing this letter, it'll stir up interest as well as help in getting "gigs." Thanks also for your 'zine. We never stopped reviewing 'em, we just didn't have anyone interested in reviewing them. That is until now. Starting in Vol. 5 – No. 2, Chad from the Battle Creek, MI based 'zine, **CORNFLAKE OVERDOSE**, *is now our "official" 'zine reviewer [although some of our other writers will occasionally review 'zines too]. If there's anything else I can do to help you with, please feel to write or call anytime! -- NZ.*

Dear "confused" Fred Beldin,

"Sporting tattoos and mohawks", and having bad habits or not, punk is not something that existed or even exists today. Punk is a word that was created by someone(s) who was trying to stereotype and/or label someone something. Just as horribly as people use the word "niggers", "faggot", and even terms like "hippie". These are all labels that the media and other ignorant persons have created to keep people labeled and separated.

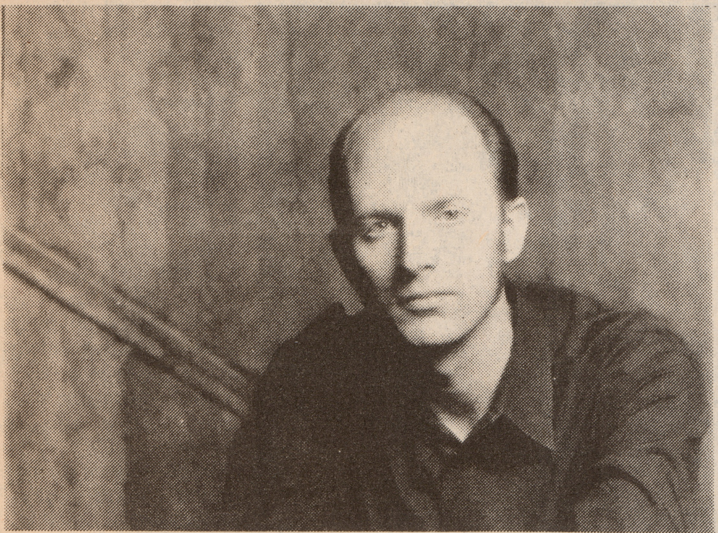
The "area" (for lack of better words) that began receiving the punk label many years ago, was so diverse and composed of so many different types of people, that you like the creators of this term are just as guilty as they are. Guilty of perpetuating a label with stereotypes and status-quos to follow. You mention something about "the classic hard-core punk." ?EXCUSE ME? When you have a body of individuals as diverse and open as what you are trying so desperately to place a label on how the hell do you pick a "classic"?

If you choose to continue to put effort in defining a term that was made up to do exactly what it is doing, segregating and dividing, then realize you are condoning someone labeling you. As much as anyone may think they have the "correct" definition to what "punk" is or isn't keep in mind how difficult it is to define something that doesn't exist. Peace, love and disappointment,

Stephanie Naive
stephnaive@hotmail.com

Hey everybody,
As some of you may already know, Hoppin' MAD is currently looking for a new bass player. Yeah, Chuck is going to be leaving us and we need someone to take over where he left off. So, we wanted to send an email out to our mailing list with the hope that you could help get the word out or to see if maybe any of you would be interested in joining the band and taking over on bass duties. Obviously, there are some requirements but, we are willing to give anybody a chance to show us what they got....so, don't be a chicken!...o.k.?!
Thanx a lot, in advance, for the help and if any of you are interested or know anyone who would be, please contact us at hpnmad@aol.com <mailto:hpnmad@aol.com> or call the Hoppin' MAD hotline at (248)589-3631, and leave a voice message!

Take it easy,
Bill and Jay



"SAD LOVE SONGS AND LET'S PARTY" MIKE IRELAND & HOLLER

No one thinks much of Lansing, Michigan, least of all her residents. Our accomplishments are certainly dubious. Michigan State University makes national news for drunken street riots, the state government sits fat and pompous within our city limits and our bars and frat houses are at least partially responsible for the Verve Pipe's success. There's not much to keep the youth (or those who cling to it) in the Capital City beyond their educational years and indeed, most either depart or talk endlessly of how they plan to. The rest of us who remain, for love or for laziness, get mighty thirsty in this gray city. We give up and head for Mac's Bar.

This is the audience that responded so strongly to the honky-tonk heartbreak of Kansas City, MO's **Mike Ireland & Holler** *on a lonely Wednesday night three years ago. The normally despondent, aloof Lansing crowd stomped and hooted their appreciation at a surprised and elated unknown alt-country group who were road testing material for their upcoming SubPop Recs release.* **Holler** *has returned to Lansing's most celebrated dive several times since to continued enthusiasm, even as their debut album* **Learning How To Live** *gathers rave reviews from publications large or small and their live bookings pair them with some of America's top country artists (including legends such as Merle Haggard and Bonnie Owens) in far fancier big-city clubs.*

The combo's most recent appearance here last April presented a stripped-down version of the act, from a quartet to a duo following the departure of brothers Michael and Paul Lemon (lead guitar and drums, respectively). Lead singer / bassist **Mike Ireland** *is truly a solo artist now, accompanied only by the guitar and harmonies of fellow traveler Dan Mesh.* **Holler**'s *original incarnation was an unnaturally tight and tasteful country group that could swing effortlessly between mournful ballads and defiant Bakersfield-style honky-tonk. The duo that took to Mac's stage this time had a lot to live up to, and didn't disappoint. With* **Ireland**'s *songwriting now completely front and center, a more direct and intimate approach was utilized that drew the crowd even deeper into his bittersweet world of betrayals and redemption.*

The years preceding **Holler**'s *formation were tempestuous for* **Mike Ireland**. *He'd been the bassist for the Starkweathers, who had appeared on one of Bloodshot Recs' influential insurgent country compilations and recorded a single for SubPop. The story has been told more times than is prudent in the press already...* **Ireland** *discovered that his wife was having an affair with the lead singer of his band. The loss of both relationships was a source of understandable despair for Ireland but when SubPop made it known that there was still a still a space for him as a solo artist he turned that despair into a haunting collection of country songs that is easily the most personal yet universal release of 1998.*

Learning How To Live *draws from the lush "countrypolitan" sounds of 1970's-era Charlie Rich and far lesser artists but any potential sappiness is boiled down into a strong, stiff shot of raw country thanks to the talents of Ireland's backup band* **Holler**. *The Lemon brothers (both ex-Starkweathers) each performs with rare precision and taste, saying as much with what they don't play as with what they do. Dan Mesh's rhythm guitar is solid and imaginative, but it's his soaring, perfect backup vocals that distinguish his contributions to the group. When they sing in unison, Ireland and Mesh blend their voices into one lonesome cry of desperation against a world that has betrayed so thoroughly, but still dangles the keys to happiness in the distance... yet first there is a long, dark night that will take tremendous strength and will to walk beyond.*

Paul "Smokey" Lemon was the first to depart last fall. A husband and the father of a three-year-old child, Lemon was forced to forgo the band's five / six week tour schedule in favor of domestic responsibilities. "No big fireworks," **Ireland** *says of the split, "It got to the point where it was becoming hard for him. At some point he had to choose. He's largely the at-home caregiver, so when he's gone it's mostly the kid being in day care, which I don't think parents are really anxious to do." Lead guitarist Michael Lemon followed his brother out of the band shortly after. There have been some half-hearted auditions but no one who lives up to the Lemons' legacy, although the search does bring up memories of the band's original search for a rhythm guitarist, the slot that Mesh eventually filled.*

Mike: We must have gone through, not 25 calls but 25 actual auditions. People were coming down that couldn't play, that wouldn't play. It was like a joke... someone walks in the room and says, "*Well, I just wanna let you guys know, I like to party!*" Well, you'll fit right in here cuz that's what we're all about! Sad love songs and let's party! People would hide from us in the basement, set up behind other people's amps and not make eye contact. Just inept. Finally he shows up... we were sold from the beginning.

Dan: I actually went home and learned the songs you wanted me to learn, which nobody else apparently did. When we were making the record out in L.A. I thought about that. We were in the studio that the Rolling Stones were mixing Brides to Babylon in. I ran into Keith Richards in the hall and I was thinking, "*If those guys had just bothered to learn their parts they could be here right now!*" Eventually we found that we all have a work ethic in common. Holler worked hard.

M: I'm kinda about the work ethic. Sometimes to a fault. But that's what it is to me. There's a lot of discipline to it. Any four guys can get up and make a bunch of noise, scream and holler... it's fine, the cover story can be "we're just having fun." Fun's not high on my list of life priorities. I'm always amazed that people want to do this and they know what's involved.

You say you don't do music for fun, but what do you do it for?

M: I wish I knew. I feel strongly, like I need to do it. I don't feel like other people need me to, I need to do it. I think there's egotism to it, some neuroses I'm working out. I don't think anyone puts themselves in a situation where you get up on stage, make everyone look at you and listen to what you're saying, where there isn't some neurotic need that's being fulfilled. I mean, it's terrifying... I think the fear is a part of it to be embraced. I trust that response. When I think that we connect with an audience, it seems at the time that it's an important thing, that we're sharing something that actually matters to people. That's why if we're playing for a whole bunch of people, that's good, but if we're playing for 10 people and we actually have that connection, it's as moving to me. I come away from shows sometimes being totally happy and overwhelmed. But I don't know if the word is fun.

D: It can be exhilarating. When I was a kid, I'd go see good shows that would be an intense emotional experience. Now, sometimes playing can be that way, not always, but sometimes playing can be an intense emotional experience.

M: I need that, I don't know why. Probably, more normal people get it from their personal lives. It seems weird to me. You can think of it as a business but there's a whole lot of stuff you'd put up with to be able to do this and there's not a lot of money.

Learning How To Live was written during an extremely painful time in your life. Do you think that depression makes for better art?

M: No... I think sometimes depression is a way into yourself, your own psyche, a way of having to look at what you do and the things around you. It's easy to be oblivious to stuff, even what's going on with yourself. Then occasionally life throws up those events that you can't really look around. For me, to a degree, I think it helped artistically. It made me confront some things and, maybe, get over the fear that there'd be something wrong with sharing these things. That's what the songs were about. That's scary, too... this is what I'm gonna share with everybody and the worst thing is, the shows we were going to do first, were in front of the people I knew. It was going to be Kansas City, Columbia... for me, I think I respond in a deeper way to darker, unhappy songs. It's the stuff that comes out of me and the better stuff that comes out of me tends to be sad, morose, depressing stuff.

Do you think there's room in mainstream country music for what you do?

M: I'd like to think so... I think what we do is idiosyncratic and the people I like, who're idiosyncratic, don't seem to have hits. I guess I'm skeptical that there's room for that. There's always a possibility, always oddball people who rise up and you say, "*Wow, look at that, they had a hit, who'd have thought?*" I don't think Charlie Rich thought he was going to be a superstar. The album that broke through wasn't all that different from the albums he'd done before. Y'know, right time, right place and a couple great songs ...

After the Lansing gig, **Ireland** *and Mesh were off across the sea for a series of shows in Ireland, including an appearance on Irish television ("Broadcast nationwide into 5400 homes!" quipped Mesh), a trek that would have been economically infeasible as a quartet. Since then, fresh material has been recorded for inclusion on new compilations from Bloodshot and Swedish label Sound Asleep Records.* **Ireland** *will take to the road without his partner for a songwriter-in-the-round tour with* **Joe Pernice** *and* **Tommy Womack** *in July that should hit the Ann Arbor, Michigan area.*

RUTH'S HAT:
"Buddy Holly on Speed"

by Rob Gorczyca of
UPRISING!

The band, **RUTH'S HAT**, containing three Canadians and two Detroiters is a pop-punk quintet that combines the doo-wop melodies and harmonies of the 1950's with the speed and crunchy guitar of late 1970's punk. The result – extremely catchy pop songs mixing jangly guitars with killer hooks and harmonies.

How did the band form?

PJ: **RUTH'S HAT** formed in the summer of 1996, but we didn't play a real show until January 1997. The band includes **Jack** and **Mike McCallum** on bass and guitar, respectively. They lived beside **Tony**, our drummer, for eight years. The three of them played together in various bands throughout high school. Mike and I (Mike sings, I play guitar and sing) had written songs and played at open mic nights around Detroit. We were all friends, and, subsequent to an alcohol-induced jam session at a party, decided to form a band.

Mike: We were up in Grand Bend, Ontario, drinking and hanging out, and **PJ** started to play some of our songs for friends of ours from London, Ontario. One thing led to another and Jack, Mike (who we call "**Bolus**"), and Tony were playing in a band with PJ and I. We never thought we would actually amount to anything, at least I sure didn't.

What influences the band's music?

PJ: 50's rock-n-roll and late 70's punk. **Buddy Holly** is God. The **Everly Brothers** are a big influence on our vocals, as are **The Beatles**. The **Ramones** are an influence, but we aren't your typical "1-2-3-4 band" – we pile on the hooks and harmonies.

M: I'd say that artists like **Chuck Berry**, **Bobby Darin**, **Dion** and **Del Shannon** influence our song-writing while bands like the Ramones, **The Mr. T Experience**, **The Queers** and **The Automatics** influence our playing style.

Who writes the music?

PJ: Mike and I write most of the songs. Jack writes some as well.

What kind of music would you call it?

PJ: Not pop punk, *punk pop*. We are essentially a punk band playing pop songs.

Do you have any tapes, records or CDs, out yet?

PJ: We've released three 7" records, with two more on the way. Also two cassettes, three including our crappy demo, and a bunch of tracks on comp CDs.

Mike: Yeah, we have done lots of vinyl. By the end of May, we'll have released five different 7" records, one self-release, three on different labels in the States and one out of Italy. I'd really like to do a full-length CD before we do any more vinyl.

Hooked up with a label yet?

M: I suppose that you could say that we've "hooked up" with **Mutant Pop** (Oregon), **SPG** (San Francisco), **They Still Make Records** (Chicago) and **Gonna Puke** (Italy) for 7"s. It's just that with 7" records, it's not that uncommon to do one record with a label and that's it. We've been talking to some labels about full-lengths, but nothing's confirmed yet, just talk. We want to talk to lots of labels before we make a final decision. As PJ mentioned, we've also been on some comp CDs. A few cool labels that we've worked with or are working with now for comps are **Grub**, **Paranoid** and **Ruin Records**.

If you guys could pick a label and sign to it, which would you choose?

PJ: We're not on the crusade to get "signed" to any particular label, we just hope people will continue to put out our records. Mutant Pop is the greatest label in the world and will always be my favorite. I'd love to do more music with them in the future. I'm a fan of any label that treats us fairly, and is dedicated to promoting our music. Some other labels putting out music I like are: **Hopeless**, **Panic Button**, **Melted**, **Break Up!**, **Clearview**, **SkullDuggery**, **Get Hip**, **Bomp**, **Lookout!**, **Not Lame**... too many to list, really. They have good taste in the bands they sign. But, until I meet the people behind the music, I can't speak as to which ones are honest and dedicated enough to work with.

M: I really like Mutant Pop, too. It's an awesome label run by a really cool guy. On top of that, we've already done a record with Mutant Pop. Fans of the label know who we are.

Where'd you guys learn to harmonize so well?

PJ: Lots of practice! We couldn't sing as well together when we started the band, but Mike and I worked at it. Our dad showed us the ropes, he had played in bands his whole life. He taught us to sing in harmony, and it worked so well that it eventually became the band's focal point. Mike and I work out all the harmonies ourselves, but we wouldn't have the ear for it if it wasn't for him.

M: It also helps to listen to other singers and bands that harmonize well. The Everly Brothers, Beatles, The Mr. T Experience and the Teen Idols are good to listen to. The Teen Idols do a lot of layering with their vocal tracks doubling, maybe tripling -- I can't tell harmony parts. It sounds pretty cool.

Do you guys play out often? Where?

PJ: We play a few times a month all over Michigan and Ontario.

M: We play out in London and Detroit the most, as those are our hometowns. It's kind of cool to have two hometowns. Playing in two different "scenes" -- I hate the word -- we were able to branch out in two different directions, north of London towards Toronto and all over Michigan, into Ohio. We've gone from playing Howell to Chicago and had tons of fun in both cities. We'd pretty much go anywhere as long as it sounds like people want to see us. We're going to be playing out a lot this summer.

What are some of the big-labeled bands you've played with?

PJ: Hmmm... this is really shameless name-dropping, but what the hell. **Pansy Division, Mustard Plug, Chixdiggit, Marilyn's Vitamins, The Hi-Fives, Diesel Boy, The Nobodys, The Mad Caddies, The Planet Smashers**. Plus, we have upcoming shows with **Beatnik Termites**, **Teen Idols** and **The Lillingtons**.

M: We play with **Hoppin' Mad** quite a bit (**Storm Recs**). They're from Detroit. I recommend checking them out. Playing with **Mustard Plug** is always fun too, because they're such a friendly band. Those shows usually go well for us, despite the fact that we don't play ska.

What do you all do outside of* RUTH'S HAT*?

PJ: I work for VMS as a news monitor. I watch the news and transcribe it to the company's web page. I remember in high school, teachers would tell me, "No one's going to pay you to watch TV, Mr. Sloan." Looks like I had the last laugh. I can't do it forever, but it makes me enough money to drive to shows and buy records.

M: I go to school at Michigan State and work in the summers. I graduate in May, and I plan on surfing the West Coast for most of that month because East Coast waves suck. The Canadians also work and go to school.

What is the future of the band?

PJ: Sex with groupies.

M: We want to keep making records and do a full-length with a nice label. We will, of course, continue to play shows all over the place. We'd like to start touring once we release a full-length.

And finally, where the heck did that name come from?

PJ: I think the name is lame.

M: Before the band got together, I was at a party in Owen Sound, Ontario with my beer drinking Canadian friends. A friend of mine, who now plays guitar in **RUTH'S HAT**, played drums in a play called "Ruth." We thought this was pretty funny, so when he wore his "Ruth" t-shirt, we started to call him Ruth. Then we were on the boat and he lost his hat. Everyone was asking where his hat was. "Ruth's hat" became the theme for the weekend. We thought it was catchy. A year later when we started the band, **RUTH'S HAT** came up as a suggestion. We said, "Okay, but we'll only use it until we think of something better... 'cause **RUTH'S HAT** is a really stupid name! Now we're called **RUTH'S HAT**. Some people love it, some people hate it, but everyone remembers it because it's so weird.

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GALACTIC COWBOYS

DAVID LEE

The **GALACTIC COWBOYS** have blasted off with yet another album and tour, and their usual wide range of tunes in their holsters. **At the End of the Day** sounds pretty much as you'd expect, not many surprises and, in this case, that's nice. Throughout their lineup and label changes, these Texans have managed to spread a sound that is completely their own. You don't confuse **GALACTIC COWBOYS** with anyone else and that too is nice. I had the chance to sit down and rap for a bit with **Ben Huggins** about the record and where in the cosmos **GALACTIC COWBOYS** is likely to go.

You guys must be pretty happy with the new record?
Oh Yeah! I think that some of the questions you have as an artist didn't arise with this one. On the last album, I had certain questions about things once it was done, but this one is totally there, everything we wanted to be on an album is there. It's 100%.

It would follow that the previous releases didn't make you quite as happy?
Hindsight is always "20/20." The thing about the last album, **The Horse that Bud Bought**, it didn't come out to rave reviews or fan lauding. I can't put my finger on what it was, but we still like the album. We've heard everything from, "The name is too weird," to "The artwork is too flowery." The only questions that I had were certain production questions. In my mind, the answer was that we had two artists: Alan, our drummer, produced At the End of the Day and Machine Fish, and Brian Garcia who did other production work for us and was the engineer on Space in Your Face. They got together and produced The Horse that Bud Bought. It was like having two artists in one room trying to paint one painting. They both had to compromise and it was that, a compromise production wise. Song-wise, I still love the songs and think they still represent where the **GALACTIC COWBOYS** were at that point in time and I think that it was a great album but then we went on to this album and, like I said, the questions that I had on The Horse that Bud Bought I don't have here. It is full on there.

GALACTIC COWBOYS

Metal Blade did a good job of getting the band's name out there for the last record. Do you expect the same kind of push this time around, or do you feel like it's a matter of hitting the streets with the tour?
No, we're expecting to see some ads out there! We're going to be on the road too. Even our fans, people who're already into the music, they want to see it live, that's where you sell the music. When I say sell it I'm not talking about someone selling snake oil, I'm talking about [how] you make the music alive and real, when you get out on the road and perform. We didn't do any touring on the last album, because of bad timing. This time we're going to be on the road with our good friends **KINGS X**. They're also planning on getting us over to Europe.

What has the reaction from European and Japanese audiences been to what, I think, is a very American band?
I haven't been to Japan, but I did an interview with *Burrn Magazine*, and the girl that I'd spoken with, hadn't heard the early stuff, but said that the editor of the magazine really likes us. I don't know, we've never been there and, as far as I know, we've never been asked to go, so it's hard to tell if there are any fans there or not.

You have been to Europe though, right?
Right. In Europe I think that there's more open mindedness and a willingness to hear anything. They don't depend on radio so much there, whereas mind-numbed and lazy Americans depend on someone to tell them what to listen to. That plays a big part in why we haven't had as much success here, because it's pretty much a closed market here, with all the big companies. They handle the little record companies like a redheaded step child and tell them what to play, so they've got to play it. If they (the fans) don't know you're there, they won't know to go and buy it.

The reason I asked, is that in Europe it seems people are more into "music" and less a particular style. Do you take that into consideration when you're writing? Do you stop and say, "Ok, we need to do a slow or a mid-tempo song now."?
It just happens. It's something that we've always done. We've never tried to say, "Oh, we're not going to use this [or that] influence." If it's a slow song, it's a slow song. If it's a good song we use it, and if it's not, we set it on a shelf and wait until later. Sometimes, in the case of "It's Not Over" it was actually recorded for The Horse that Bud Bought, but we had too many songs. We had 14 songs on that record, so we set that one off to the side. [Later] Alan took out the tapes and remixed it for this album and we love it. A lot of times, it depends on what you're feeling at the time. For that album, that was the song we set aside. For this record we were like, "C'mon, what were we thinking?"

Were there songs left over from the recording of this record, that will find its way onto a future disc?
Actually, on this CD we used everything. It's all there. The story behind "It's Not Over" is that when you sell a record to Japan, you have to have a bonus track. That song was going to be the bonus track. When Alan mixed it we were like, "Man, we like this song and we want it on the album." We wanted them to hear it in the States," so we had to go digging through old demo tapes to find something to use as a bonus track for Japan. It's one of those things, where you do a double take and go, "What were we thinking?" It worked out because it sounds great on this album.

I was reading an old *Metal Edge* interview, where you were talking about your private studio. Did you use it for this record and, if so, how has it been working for you as opposed to a rented studio?
There are certain aspects that are great. You don't have the pressure of, "If you don't get this finished..." You know what I am saying? There was no financial or time pressure, but at the same time, it's a downfall too, because there are certain things about a time schedule that helps you...

Stay on track?
Exactly, we delivered this album late, because we were taking our time with it. It took us like four-and-a-half months, there are [both] good and bad points. It's very comfortable and relaxed, but there's none of the anxiety about getting it done on time. We're hoping to get the next few in on time, though!

Was Metal Blade calling you for dailies, asking "Where is it?"
Well, not dailies, all they wanted was to get it in on time. Brian trusts us to give him a good album. We gave him a schedule and he said, "Ok, that sounds good." But when the end of that schedule came around, he'd ask, "O.K. Where is it?" and [we'd say], "Uh, give us another month?"

How did you end up coming over to Metal Blade from Geffen in the first place?
A situation arose at Geffen, that was kind of out of our hands, because we weren't directly tied to the label, but our records were released through Geffen. We had this production deal with our ex-manager and, in the process of getting out of the management deal, we were also trying to get out of the production deal. He was playing hard ball, and Geffen was like, "Well, we've put out two albums and you haven't sold anything. We want to do one album at a time." Since he had the deal, and we were trying to get out of the deal with him. He was basically doing the negotiating and said it was "Two records or nothing." Geffen said, "I guess it's nothing." They dropped us and, at the time, we were real confident. We were like, "Hey, we're on Geffen and we're the **GALACTIC COWBOYS**!" We got dropped in the fall of '93, rode out the holidays and came back after the first of the year, writing songs and sending off demos. Our manager, at the time, was also managing **PANTERA** and **WHITE ZOMBIE** and we thought, "He's a hot shot, he'll get us a deal." A year-and-a-half later. Everybody was depressed and frustrated; we actually broke up for about two weeks. Close to the end of that two weeks, everybody had settled into *not* being in the **GALACTIC COWBOYS** anymore.. **Monty**, our bass player, left to visit his folks. When [he] called home there was this frantic message a on his machine from our manager and **Brian Slagel**. They were like, "Look, you can't break up, we're signing a record deal!" We were like, "Why didn't we know about this?" Apparently, they had been working on this for several months, and never called or told us about it. We had a meeting and decided it would be a good thing, to go ahead and sign the deal. We did and made Machine Fish and the rest is history. Besides, our guitar player quit at that time and we hired **Wally Farkas**.

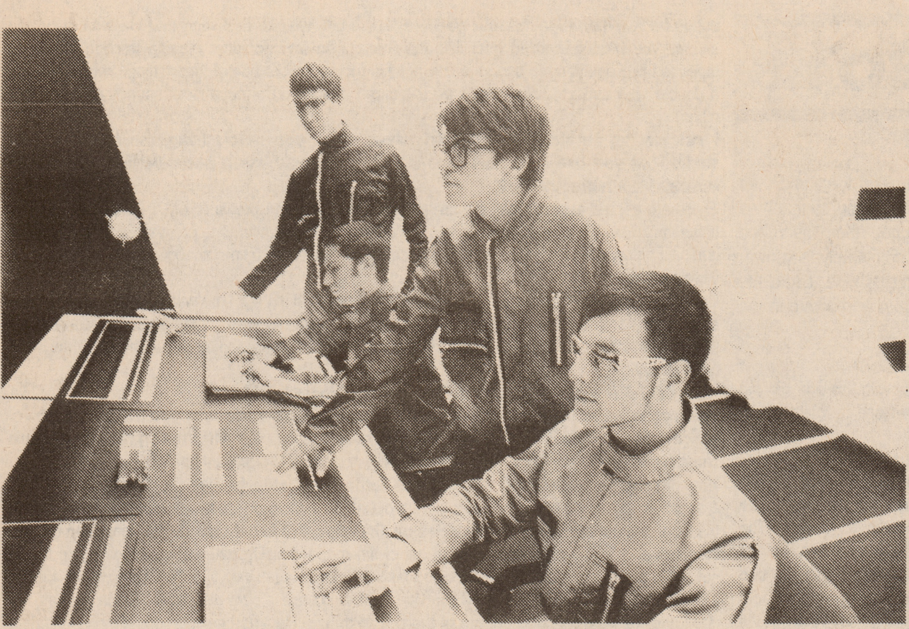
As far as having a direction for the band, is it something you think much about?
It's usually when we're at that point in our lives, when we're writing an album. That's why there's so much diversity, besides the fact that we all have a wide-range of influences, we're also individuals. Where we are musically depends on where we are mentally, emotionally, spiritually or whatever. That can control the direction of the songwriting too.

I haven't had the chance to see you guys live yet, but I'm curious as to what you do when one of the other guys is singing. Do you play guitar or anything?
I take a moment to towel off, get a drink and, by that time, it's time to sing a backup line! What usually happens is, I'll either pick up an acoustic guitar and play along or, on some songs, I sing so much backup that it gives me enough time to get a drink of water and come back to the mic. It's no big deal.

In the bio that came with the CD, there's a line that says *"Are there really intelligent headbangers?"* What was meant by that and what type of people are Galactic Cowboys fans?
What, are you trying to get the general consensus of IQ of a **GALACTIC COWBOYS** audience?

Yeah, what's the average IQ of one of your fans? No, what I mean is, when you look out into the audience who do you see?
If nothing else, I'd have to say that they're patient, because there's one thing that I've always told people about our music, which is you can't walk past a room and say, "Oh my god! That's the best thing that I've ever heard in my life!" It's not one of those "hit your ears and all of a sudden you are hooked" kind of things. It could possibly happen with some people, but for me it's always been that you have to sit down, with the headphones on, and by the third or fourth listen, you go "This is great!" I've heard that from many people from [our] first album all the way up. So, I'd have to say that they have patience and they're actually trying to go beyond the initial thing. This isn't an "easy sell" kind of music. I think those that listen to us want good music and I would like to think that they are all college graduates!

You would like to think that.
Yeah, well I know we have a few in there!



MAN...OR ASTROMAN?

By Rachael Overmyer

MAN…OR ASTROMAN? *Their name alone begs the question. I for one am convinced that they are the later. The band is a collective of four alleged surf rockin' aliens,* **Coco the Electric Monkey Wizard, Birdstuff, Trace Readings** *and* **Blazar the Probe Handler** *that have immigrated through the state of Alabama and have now found a home on indie label, Touch N' Go. In April, the Astromen released their newest album* **Eeviac**.

During a fall tour that kicked off following their recent homecoming from Brazil, my friend, Lizzie and I were able to sit down and speak to the four Astromen. What ensued was a very silly conversation. The interview that follows has been abridged for you, the reader, in order to make more sense.

I see that there are two new members of the band.

Coco: They're not new. I'm sure you're familiar with the concept of space, as in audio terms, if you have two audio signals and you shift them in space by 180 degrees, they cancel each other out and you hear nothing. The same principles hold true for the visual realm. It still has to do with waves and frequencies and it's electromagnetic as opposed to mechanical. What we have here is a case of optical phase shifting. When **MAN…OR ASTROMAN?** crashed here there's no telling how many astromen arrived. But, **Blazar** and **Trace Readings** happened to be 180 degrees out of phase with **Starcrunch** and **Dexter X**. What happened was **Blazar the Probe Handler**, while he was out of phase with us, he managed to build himself this device that enabled him to shift his own position in the optical phase. What he didn't realize was that all the Astromen are linked. If you shift one Astroman's position, you slightly shift several others. He was directly linked 180 degrees with Starcrunch. He didn't know any of this was going on. Then, in a chain of events upon which that switch was thrown, Blazar came bursting in. I see that there are two new members in the band picture. Meanwhile, Starcrunch went out of phase. He built the phase shifter and then he shifted his own phase, but can't see the device any longer because he's out of phase with the actual device. Starcrunch is actually there. So, Starcrunch is now stuck with this machine and doesn't know how to operate it.

Blazer: I meant to leave a manual, but I didn't have time.

Coco: So, we have these two guys who've been with us all along, but were out of visual phase.

Is "alien" a derogatory term for you?

Coco: Not to me personally

Birdstuff: I get a little offended.

Coco: He's the sensitive one.

Birdstuff: Where we come from, you guys are from outer space.

So, we're the aliens.

Coco: Otherworldly, universally challenged.

What is the mission of MAN…OR ASTROMAN?

Coco: Get the hell off this stinking planet and, well, take over.

Birdstuff: I'm integrating at this point.

Coco: No, you're not. That's what always happens to any good rock band, one of the members decides to settle down and integrate. Next thing you know, he's going to be trying to have babies.

In the way humans perceive aliens, do we come even close as in movies, for example?

Coco: No.

What do aliens look like?

Coco: The thing is, where we're from, we're a gas. You could make a movie about a gas, but what would people watch? Humans tend to portray aliens as some modified humanoids which, considering the vast diversity of life forms on the planet, shows an extreme lack of creativity, that aliens from some other world are going to look remotely similar to humans. So, not really realistic.

So your stereotypical alien doesn't exist?

Coco: I'm not saying they don't exist, but percentage wise, it would make up a very small part of what's actually out there, just like humans make up a very small part of what's actually on this planet.

Birdstuff: Most aliens look like happy, longhaired unicorns and they have rainbows shooting out from under them when they run. It's a very happy place.

Alright, you've recently completed a clone project, where female and male clones played in your place in spots on the tour.

Coco: Yeah, you only saw the two that toured, you haven't seen all the clones on the lab floor. Some of the initial clones didn't make it to playability.

Birdstuff: We found out that here on earth, even though we look like humans, we've been able to replicate the outer shell, we found that our interworkings are too different. We can't reproduce with humans.

Coco: We've got to be able to make a stand, past our individual life span, or we would be completely mortal. What if we weren't finished taking over the planet and we should happen to die? Somebody has to continue. We can actually produce with humans, the problem is that it doesn't breed a pure Astroman. So, we had to clone ourselves. The first step is mapping out the whole Astroman genome and the whole genetic pattern. Birdstuff figured it out. After that, we were able to duplicate it and that gave us the first successful batch, the Alphas. We realized that once we duplicate, we can improve.

Birdstuff: The problem with the Alphas was they weren't in touch with their feminine side, they had a little too much testosterone. So we improved them and came up with the Gamma clones, all female Astromen.

Are the clones coming back at all?

Coco: They're in the freezer right now. Now that we know that we can do it, we've got them, they're there just in case. So what if, Blazar, for example, is hit with a much larger microphone stand and is completely not capable of doing his Blazar duties? We can go to the freezer and pull out a Blazar clone because we have plenty of his DNA. It's kind of like an Astro-sperm bank.

To your knowledge, have any other aliens posed as bands here on Earth?

Birdstuff: Aliens need to immigrate through the state of Alabama at some point. The only other claim has been the magical, mystical Sun Ra, who is from Saturn, of course. He immigrated through Alabama. If you're going to do it, that's the way you have to do it. He did it that way and so do we, therefore he's the only other person that we will actually claim to acknowledge from outer space. But all bands are from outer space in a certain sense, right?

Since you guys are made of gas, how do you nourish yourselves? I mean, I saw you fellers eating Earthy cuisine this evening.

Birdstuff: Well, we put it inside of our body, but we have to empty our boots out at the end of the night. We eat a lot of people chow. Are you familiar with people chow?

No.

Coco: You're familiar with puppy chow, right? It's quite convenient for an animal like that to have one food. People chow doesn't taste like dog chow, it tastes like no other.

TRACE READINGS IN COMMUNICATION

JUNE CARTER CASH:

An American Legend

JUNE CARTER CASH *has been a living legend for more than half-a-century. She began performing in the 1930s with her mother,* **Maybelle Carter**, *and the original* **Carter Family** *-- the historic vocal group who wrote and collected many of the songs which formed the bedrock of country music. By the 1950s, June was one of country music's brightest stars, performing throughout America with the likes of* **Hank Williams**, **Patsy Cline** *and* **Elvis Presley**, *all of whom became close friends. In the 1960s, she joined forces with* **JOHNNY CASH**, *whom she later married--and with whom she has won two Grammies. Also an accomplished actress (she recently won raves for her performance in* **"The Apostle"** *with* **Robert Duvall**), *the always-bustling June took time out from her stay in Jamaica to talk to us about her forthcoming album* **Press On** *[Risk / Small Hairy Dog Recs].*

How did this album come about?

For years, **Marty Stuart** and **Rodney Crowell** -- both of whom are ex sons-in-law of mine -- have been tellin' me to make another album. And they always said they'd love to do it with me. So when Vicki Hamilton (of Small Hairy Dog Records) asked me if I wanted to do something, I held 'em to it. I even thought about calling the album "June Carter Cash and her Ex-Sons-In-Law."

You begin the album with "Diamonds In The Rough", a song recorded 50 years ago by your mother and the original Carter family. Why?

It's one of my favorite Carter Family songs. I first heard mama sing it with Aunt Sara and Uncle A.P. at a Carter Family show that was held in a commissary, way back in coal mines near Coburn, Virginia. We were performing for the miners and their families and Uncle A.P. had already given each of us kids a dollar for singing. I was very small, but the song made quite an impression on me. I remember thinking about how they were singing about diamonds and there we were in a mine. And, for some reason, I've always associated that memory with the beginning of my singing career. It's a precious kind of song, don't you think? I've always thought of a lot the people I love as "Diamonds in the Rough", especially my husband. He's a very tough man, of course, but he also deeply believes in God, family and friends.

You and Johnny sing a deeply personal song together on the album.

It was written by a school teacher from over in Donaldson, Tennessee. John brought it home at a time when I was terribly sick and had been for over a month. I could barely hold my head up and the doctor couldn't figure out what was wrong. When John and I first sang this song together, I couldn't keep from crying because I literally thought it might be the last song I would ever sing. Fortunately, I went to the Mayo Clinic and they found out I had a form of hepatitis. But that song still makes me feel the same way. When we sing it live, I can actually see myself writing in the sand by the River Jordan. And I can see it touch people in the audience -- I literally see them crying.

Another song on the album is about show business -- "I Used To Be Somebody", in which you allude to your close relationships with James Dean, Elvis Presley, Patsy Cline and Hank Williams.

Well... part of the song is real and part is fantasy. **James Dean** was awfully close to **Elia Kazan**, who brought me to New York and put me in acting school. I stayed with Kazan and his wife when I arrived in New York in the '50s. James Dean lived across the Park and went to the Actors Studio. When I first met him, he picked up a rose and gave it to me. I won't get into the rest of what happened, let's say he gave me a rose and leave it at that. He died not long after. At about the same time, I was workin' with Elvis and he was such a **Marlon Brando** fiend. He wanted me to come with him to see the movie, "The Wild Ones." We finally went when we were playing Hope, AK, where the President's from, I promised I would take Elvis to see Brando at Kazan's office, even though Brando scared me to death. Elvis never came, though. But he did sing "Wildwood Flower" with me. He loved Carter Family songs and, especially, hymns. We used to sing hymns way into the night. The one he loved to sing with me was "Peace In The Valley." I played piano better than him at the time, so I usually played for us.

"Tiffany Anastasia Lowe" is a different kind of song, much less serious.

Here's what happened: John and I were on our way to the Golden Globe Awards with **Tim Robbins** and **Susan Sarandon**. They were up for some awards for "Dead Man Walkin" and John had done a tune for the movie. We were going down Sunset Boulevard and as we were driving past the Roxy, we saw the name **Tiffany Lowe** on the marquee. I shouted, "Good Lord, that's my granddaughter!" It hadn't been that long since I'd taught Tiffany to play the guitar. So we snuck out early from the Golden Globes and ran back to the Roxy to see her, and she did a beautiful job. Later, we were back at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills and just as we got off the elevator **Quentin Tarantino** saw John. Well, he hollered, grabbed John around the neck and started screaming his head off: "Oh, my God! It's Johnny Cash!" [Quentin's] very energetic. Anyway, he started comin' to our shows whenever we played in the L.A. area. We were glad to have him, but after I saw "Pulp Fiction" it occurred to me, all I need is for Quentin to see Tiffany, who's a gorgeous girl. I mean, that would be the end of Tiffany. So that's what gave me the idea for the song.

The album ends with one of the most famous* Carter Family *songs ever: "Will The Circle Be Unbroken." You've sung it many times over the years; why record it again?

I can't "not" sing Carter Family songs. They're what I am. I had Marty Stuart play guitar and I sang it as quietly as I could, like a prayer. It felt so good to sing it that way. To me, the song means family -- not just mine, but the love of many families, who came together through music. That's what I've been trying to do all these many years: bring people together through music.

[*Kudos to* **Timothy @ Risk Records** *for letting us run this piece, ed.*]

SKUNK ANANSIE

DAVID LEE

SKUNK ANANSIE, now there's a name for a band! It's strangely appropriate for this bunch, especially when you take a look at the individuals who make up this British unit. I don't mean to imply that they look as though they would have a foul odor about them, it's because that they inspire the same kind of dread when you get a good look at 'em. I can easily imagine a scenario where you (or I) would get nervous if you came 'round a blind corner and saw them coming down the street. Chances are, you'd cross the street, yet would never be able to take your eyes off of them. Similarly, the group's music has much the same effect. At once foreboding and entrancing, the music is easily comparable to no one. They may get the funniest looks but, hey, they aren't the Monkees.

POST ORGASMIC CHILL is the third full-length for **SKUNK ANANSIE** and, if the history of this band teaches any lessons at all, it'd be that it's easy to predict platinum certification for a third time. What's a bit different this time out is that the punk politics that stood at the center of the first 2 records has been replaced by a bit of introspection. For instance, on the first cut, "Charlie Big Potato," lead vocalist Skin brings the listener into the band's hotel room and paints a picture that's nothing like what you'd have expected or even wanted. Easily some of the most intelligent lyricism ever written and, with an infectiously vicious bite, that's one of Skin's frighteningly enviable trademarks. It isn't until having listened a couple of times that you realize that you have just been sprayed and no amount of tomato juice will ever get you clean again.

The album is now available in select territories and will be available in others as the band's able to tour each given province. A novel approach to record promotion, but probably the best bet to attaining the proper exposure for this inventively moving band. They're scheduled to support Rammstein and Soulfly for a few weeks in the U.S. this summer, and America's only chance to experience the new album until it's officially released in the fall. My advice? Take full advantage of the opportunity should they play a town near you and, if you've got the cash, buy ***POST ORGASMIC CHILL*** on import, it'll be worth the extra Yen and the Japanese version always has a bonus track or 2 anyway.

Taking a break from the death metal church burners that I'm usually assigned to cover, I managed to get on the phone with Mark, the group's drummer, to discuss a bit about the making of the album and what looks to be one of the most interesting tours of the summer.

So, the next time I get a chance to see SKUNK ANANSIE will be while on tour with Rammstein and Soulfly?

Mark: Yeah, Rammstein and Soulfly. What a bill!

I have to say, that's quite an eclectic bill.

Yeah, we've been away from America for a while and it's only for 2 weeks, but it's a good start for the album and it's a great bill. They're both great bands.

Have you caught both of the other bands live before?

Not Soulfly, but we've seen Rammstein in the festivals that we did in Europe in 1997. There's a lot of fire, smoke and pyrotechnics. Soulfly is good as well, and we like their album.

Beside the fact that I get to see you, I'm really looking forward to seeing this tour, especially Rammstein.

Yeah, it's hard to describe it. It's kind of like *Antichrist Superstar*, isn't it? I mean, it's the same kind of sound, all that processed guitar and modern heavy metal music. They're doing well now over here, aren't they?

This is a very early warm-up sort of tour for SKUNK ANANSIE isn't it? I mean, the record isn't scheduled for release until August or something, right?

We wanted to delay it behind the European release, so that we're not stretching ourselves between the 2. When it comes out, we want to spend time here and work it, and do justice to it here. There's nothing worse than an album coming out and it's released all over the world on the same day. Everybody wants you, but by the time you get 'round to certain territories, they've all forgotten about you, because you weren't there to promote it when it came out. Also, it ties in nicely with the tour and it's the way the record company wanted to do it, to be honest.

And, of course, you're in a new relationship with Virgin Records.

Yeah, we are. We've always been on Virgin in Europe. We changed in England and America. One Little Indian were great up to a point, but then it seemed to be the natural progression, to move onto the whole world with Virgin.

Has the change in labels been reflected in the music at all, or would the music have been the same despite the label?

The label doesn't have any say in the music. It's something we carried forward from our old deal, that we wanted to maintain full artistic control. We weren't interested in moving to a label that wouldn't want us to keep it and we kept it. It's something that's important to us. Obviously, these things take time and it gave us time to write more songs and develop ideas over a longer period of time. We also had to wait for Andy Wallace, because he wasn't available initially when we wanted to go in and do the album. We had all this time to write all these songs and I think that it is reflected in the album. We ended up with 48 songs, recorded 15 and put 12 on the record. We had a lot more choices and, I think, that it's a much more eclectic album because of that.

It does step away from the last record a bit, and I hate to keep using the word "accessible" in these interviews, but that's what I think describes it best. How would you describe the record as compared to the last one?

I'd say that it's a lot broader, in terms of content, and that it's more focused. I think that we've actually captured the emotion of each song a lot better on this album. When Skin has wanted to say something, she's been able to say it exactly in a few words and she found that process a lot easier this time around. We're all better songwriters, we're all better musicians, we're all better at our craft, because we've been doing it for 2 years. Our albums tend to be sonic photographs, snapshots of where we were at that particular time. We're not a band that makes the same album over and over again. We want to learn from past albums, then move on, get better, develop new ideas and be able to make better albums each time.

As a group you certainly have an identifiable sound, but it's not something that sounds exactly the same from record to record.

We want to move on and make albums that are more interesting than we did the last time.

This time out, as you mentioned, you got Andy Wallace to produce the record. Didn't he mix the last one as well?

He mixed the first one and we wanted him for the second, but he was busy and we had to get it mixed by someone else. He's always been, even before we were together as a band, when Skin and Lee, our manager, were plotting their ideas, they had Andy Wallace in mind then and used to send him flyers for gigs, just in case he might be in the country, you know? They were such big fans of his work, and it revealed itself that when we all got together, we were all fans of Andy Wallace's work, because of the selection of stuff that he's done, from Jeff Buckley to Sepultura. We wanted someone who had a good understanding of all types of music and somebody that also understood our passion for the live format. I think we've managed to capture it on this record. This is the most "live" album that we've ever done. They've all been live, but on the last one there was editing and it turned out to be not a fully live album, but on this one we did it. We did it a Bearsville and we're all in the same room, we each had a corner, and Andy Wallace in the middle. It was a great vibe. Depending on the moods we were in when we woke up in the morning, we'd pick up on a song and start recording it. If we were melancholy or tired or whatever, we'd do one of the slower ones, maybe "Secretly" or "I Am Not Afraid." If it was the beginning of the week and we had an exciting weekend, and were all vibed-up, then we'd go for one of the heavy ones.

Just out of curiosity, what did you all do for excitement in Woodstock, NY?

Good question! Well, there isn't a lot to do up there. I think that there's a club called "Joyous Lake" that we went to every weekend, to have a drink and to chill out. Towards the end of the recording sessions, we started to go in on most nights, because it started to feel a little bit isolated out there and we're all city people. Speaking for me, it was nice to be someplace that's quiet and serene. I bought a lot of books and sat around and read them. It was nice to be at Bearsville as well, because a lot of big albums had been made there and it's a really cool vibe.

I would imagine that at least some of the ghosts of records past still inhabit the place?

There is! There were a few weird happenings, a few weird things going on.

Give me one.

Well, we were staying in this place called "The Wolfhouse" and we had various visitors. We had a bat one day and a flying squirrel on another. If you were ever there on your own, it was extremely creepy. You were wondering if the phone was gong to ring, and it was going to be like the beginning of "Scream" or something. It's pitch black out there. I mean, you're in the middle of the woods, in a wooden house, it was freaky at times. Lights going on and off... nothing big, unfortunately, because I know that it'd read better, but it was a bit like whew!

It would be great atmosphere for a heavy metal band, I suppose.

I'm sure they'd love it there. Get some Norwegian death metal bands there -- they'd love it!

You said that you had 48 songs written for this album? How many of them will end up as "b-sides" and how many will be saved for another record?

None of them will be on the next Skunk album because we don't tend to want to hang on to things. Like I was saying, when we write things, they tend to be a snapshot of the time when we wrote it. It's from the point of then, if you see what I mean. We don't save things for the future, but we've recorded most of them for "b-sides" and the ones that haven't been recorded, will probably come up as the same sort of riff, but in a different way. They kind of get reprocessed! Nothing gets wasted unless it's crap! We're already thinking about the next album and we haven't even gone on tour yet!

Is there a song from this record that has a particular significance to you? Either musically or lyrically?

Definitely "Hotel TV." It has a lyrical content. Obviously, most of the songs were written about us in a touring situation, like "Charlie Big Potato" and all of those things, but I think that the one that means the most to me is "Skankheads." If you'd played that song for me 10 years ago and said ,"This is you playing." I'd have been like, "No way." I'm really proud of that song. I think everybody's playing is better on this album but that one, for me, I'm particularly pleased with that one.

Did your feeling for that song come during the writing stage or only after you recorded it?

That was one of the ones that was around the longest. It was one of the first ones that we wrote and seemed to come out. It came from Ace's riff. It's one of those tracks that you'll get, once you see it live. It's one of those things, where you can listen to it on the record a million times, but then when you see it live, it knocks you away. We've only done it at sound checks for TV gigs, because we haven't done any live gigs yet, but know from that, that when we do it live, it'll be pretty special. That one is definitely a favorite.

There's so much to the band visually, in the videos and the imagery used in the lyrics, but what do you guys look like on stage?

When we go out this fall in England, we'll be taking our own production out, which will be the biggest thing that we've done on our own, because we're doing well there now. The basic thing, which is the 4 of us, is going to be pretty similar so, if you can imagine the performance in the "Charlie Big Potato" video and cross that by a live audience and lots more energy, that's it. That's where we made our name, really. Everything that we are came from the live gig and that's what we are, a live touring machine and everything else we have to do is necessary, because we want to do the gigs. Before, it has been the 4 of us on stage, but now, especially in Europe, we've reached a stage where we have to take it up a level. We've been around Europe so many times, you can only do that so much before people start saying, "I've seen that." Now we're at the point where we have to make it a little bit special for them. We've got a lighting guy, Andy Watson, who made his name with Radiohead and their lights were incredible. We didn't want only lights, we wanted another kind of artistic development to the live show and that's what Andy does.

Well, that combined with the music on the record certainly wets the appetite for a live show and, I guess, that I will be seeing you with Rammstein and Soulfly this summer!

Brilliant!

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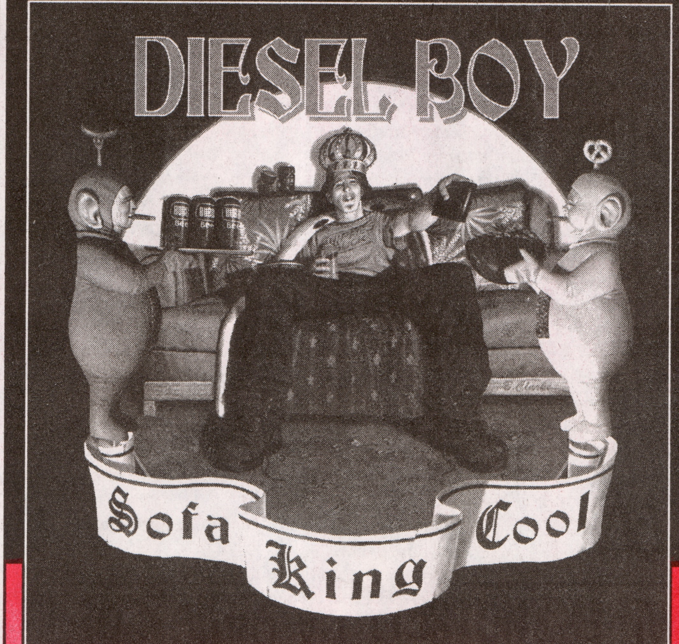
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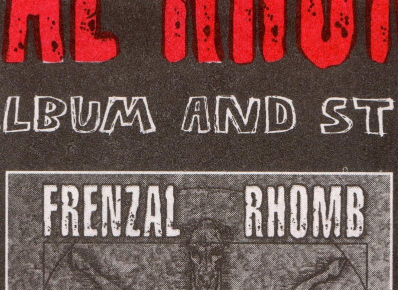
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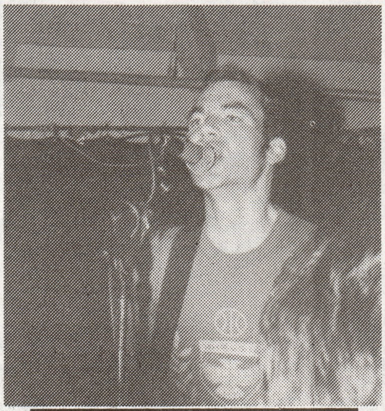
JETS TO BRAZIL

Interview by Rachael Overmyer

This interview took place with **Blake Schwarzenbach** *of the* **Jets** *before their April show at the* Magic Stick *in Detroit.*



Blake

I'm impressed that you're writing things down in addition to recording this. Sometimes you'll get a pretty involved conversation going and the guy will write down three words after a half-hour. I ask, "Are you getting this?" and they'll say, "No problem."

I'll admit I'm semi-intimidated. I'm not the most experienced interviewer. I'm just a Journalism major in school. I've heard you worked as a journalist.

I'm a retired journalist. It went wrong, so I'm out.

What didn't you like about it?

I didn't get paid enough, for starters. I'm more interested in music, so it's not my first passion.

Is that what you were doing in the down time between bands?

I did odd jobs of all sorts.

It was just a way of making your skills marketable? You're a writer.

I guess. I write for the **JETS** *now – that's my means of publication. I think the jump from California to New York inspired that. I really wanted to get out of San Francisco for 3 years. I went to school in New York and wanted to go back there and live. So, I got a Ryder truck, threw everything in there and drove out.*

Kind of a 'fly by the seat of your pants' decision?

Yeah, like most of the decisions I've made. Well, this one was pretty premeditated, I went out to visit friends, found an apartment, flew back and drove back out. But, I didn't know what I was going to do there. I had enough money saved from **JAWBREAKER**, *so I realized that I had this little bit of money and it was dwindling. I thought if I didn't go now, I'd be trapped in San Francisco. It was awful, so I went for it.*

How's the tour going so far?

It's harder than we thought it'd be and I think being a headline band, it's so new for us, that there's more expectations.

Is it really new for you guys? All the members have formerly been in headlining bands?

That doesn't get easier, though. It actually gets harder the longer you do it. If you're excited with what you're doing, it makes it harder to stay fresh. A lot of bands become veterans and I don't want that to happen to the point that we're automatons or really haggard. That's not going to fly with this crew.

So, it's a full time job but it's still fun.

Yeah, but whenever it gets ugly, I'm going to stop. I don't want to get to the point, that all of us were at in our former bands. where you feel like you have to tour or you have to make a record when you're not ready, any of that. It's not going to happen. This whole tour everyone's asking, "Where's the new record? When are you coming back here?" All I can say, over and over again, is no. We'll give you a record when we have [enough] time to write it and work on it. They don't understand.

You feel pretty good with what's going on know, well adjusted?

I feel in control of it. We're at the end of a tour now, so everyone is pretty wound-up, everyone's ready to go home. Shows are great or awful. Like, last night was amazing when we played Cincinnati. There's been a lot of good shows and there's been some real losers too. Seattle, we'll probably never be asked back to Seattle again.

Why?

Foundered, we had a rough time.

Have you had a lot of people in attendance at some shows and some crowds not as big, or, as I would assume, they'd all be pretty full rooms?

Yeah, and that's the worst part in a way, to fail in front of 800 people.

Do you think they know that you've failed, or do you think you're putting an unreal expectation on yourself?

I don't know, it doesn't matter because we know we've failed. It feels bad, I mean that's the weirdest thing, when people come up to you afterwards and say, "That was amazing." You want to ask them what show they were at. I think it's pretty apparent when we're unhappy on stage.

How was your earlier tour with the PROMISE RING, when no one had even heard the new album. It seems that a lot of people expected something that would sound like JAWBREAKER, in addition to TEXAS IS THE REASON, HANDSOME, etc. No one expected you to sound the way you did. How did you meet any criticism? Personally, all my friends thought the new wave and classic rock stuff thrown in was pretty cool.

Cool, I feel that that's the reaction in general. I think the people that didn't like it, didn't bother to tell us, which I thought was very reverent of them. We didn't get much criticism. I think people understand it's a new start, but we're not trying to hoodwink any one. I think the record's really on, really true, there's no magic tricks or anything going on.

I especially appreciate, about the record, that you aren't falling into the "hip genre" of the hour. You're not playing down to people.

I don't think we're capable of doing that. I don't think we're cool enough. I'm too old. It started with us playing in a room and writing songs that way, but we wanted to make them together.

How did you guys meet up and start a band?

I met **Jeremy** *in Seattle on the last* **JAWBREAKER** *tour. We had a mutual friend and started playing together in New York. He knew* **Chris** *and* **Brian** *and kind of brought everyone in that way.*

What influenced your decision to put the record out on Jade Tree?

Everyone knew them. I knew **Tim** *from around. They cornered us in a sly way, they did us a lot of favors, but pretty genuine favors I think. When it came time to make a record, they didn't want to wait around. They were ready to go – the fastest turn around. We got back from the studio and they were putting it out a few weeks later. It's really hard to do that on any label.*

What about the name JETS TO BRAZIL? Jay Robinson worked to record Orange Rhyming Dictionary. He used to be in a band called JAWBOX and you were in JAWBREAKER; your bands toured together and put out split 7"s. Now, you're in a band called JETS TO BRAZIL and he's in BURNING AIRLINES. There are some similarities once again. Was this a pre-meditated thing?

It's a total coincidence. I'd seen **BURNING AIRLINES** *before, so I knew the name. Our name comes from the movie* "Breakfast at Tiffany's." *It's from the poster at the travel agency that she goes to.*

I've read that lyrics in Orange Rhyming Dictionary are based on books, but they seem very personal. How much of those lyrics are fictional and how much are non-fictional?

A lot of the **JETS** *songs are fictional.*

Is it like you're taking the total perspective of the writer, where you're getting inside the characters?

Yeah, it kind of felt like that. I was writing from the voice of the character, so the character was someone who was within myself. It was personal, in that I had to get inside that character to write. It was my own interpretation. I like writing that way. In the end, all the voices are mine.

Blake and Jeremy
On Lizzie Cook's Crutches

BURTON C. BELL / FEAR FACTORY

by David Lee

I have to tell you, sometimes I have this fantasy where I just close my eyes and make pretend that I am Burton Bell and I am hanging out with my favorite heavy metal band, BLACK SABBATH, and that I get to sing with another one of the best bands on the scene today, FEAR FACTORY. How is it to really be Burton Bell?

Right now, it's pretty hectic! It's hectic but exciting at the same time. To me, everything is a new experience and I take it all in stride. I observe it and take it in. It's like, "I'm going to relish this moment." Remembering everything that I'm doing is a lot at this moment, but yeah, I'm enjoying it.

Were the two BLACK SABBATH shows a major milestone for you?

Those 2 shows we did in Birmingham, England, with the entire original lineup; we took time out of writing our record to go and do that, because we definitely didn't want to miss it. The original lineup in Birmingham for the first time in 20 years! I was like, "Dude, we got to do that," and everyone agreed. Yep, it was the definite pinnacle of my life at that moment.

FEARFACTORY

I know what you mean! It would have been annoying if it was me, running around asking for autographs and bugging them to death.

I was asking for autographs! Everybody was there! **Brian May**, **Rollins**, **Vinnie Appice** everybody was there. I got to meet **Bill Ward**, finally, and he was a super cool guy. He was even on the side of the stage watching our set. We got off stage and he was like "Brutal!"

That had to give you a rise?

It put me in a killer mood for the rest of the evening.

He's done stuff that has kind of a "FEAR FACTORY texture" to it.

Yeah, he has, hasn't he? He's been the experimental person.

Ok, you do the dream SABBATH gig, then you're on to another album. You probably haven't had anyone tell you different, but I like this one a lot.

Well, actually people have. When we had the ***Demanufacture*** record, some fans came up to us and said, "I hate it!" It was like "Ok." Then they were like, "I don't like this one, but the next one should be heavy!" We said we'd keep that in mind and we did. We wanted to stick to our roots.

This definitely has a groove. I don't want to say "funky," but it definitely grooves in a very human way.

What do you think of the word "organic?"

There you go!

Organic is a good word because it brought back the human element to **FEAR FACTORY**. We kind of lost that on ***Demanufacture***. ***Demanufacture*** was very cold and mechanical but our first record, ***Soul of a New Machine***, was a very groovy record and all of those songs had a very organic groove to them and we just combined ***Soul of a New Machine*** and ***Demanufacture*** together to bring back that human element to **FEAR FACTORY**.

I don't understand why people don't like to use the term, but this is a "concept" record.

I don't understand it either, because nobody does it anymore and, to me, it was a challenge to create this story, to create this world within the music and to make it believable. It was a challenge that we considered an obstacle, but we wanted to cross it. **FEAR FACTORY** started off as a concept. Our name is a concept, so since the beginning we've been a "thinking band" and everything we do has to have a meaning and a purpose. I think we're a very conceptual band, because that's the way we are. It's not that we were influenced by concept albums when we were growing up. I mean, yeah, there are a couple I like. I love **PINK FLOYD**'s ***The Wall***, it's awesome. There's ***Tommy*** by **THE WHO**, that's a great record, but heavy bands don't do it any more. **W.A.S.P.** did it with ***The Crimson Idol*** and **QUEENSRYCHE** did it with ***Operation Mindcrime***, but other than that, no one does it. We do it because we love it.

It would seem to me that it makes it a great deal harder, especially lyrically, to write an album as a concept as opposed to a record that is a collection of individual songs.

Exactly. It's a difficult process. For me, I worked backwards on this record. We came up with a title of the record first, ***Obsolete***, then the lyrics came later. I was writing the lyrics to all the songs at once, because I had to keep the big picture in mind, of the world that we wanted people to visualize, so everything had to be consistent and tell a story. At the same time, I had to tell a story [and] it had to have rhyme and meter, I was stressing hard during the whole thing. I was writing lyrics up until I was singing them! While I was singing them I was still changing lyrics. "Well, this could be a little better," or, "This could be done a little differently." I got that done, all of the lyrics were done, and I had to wait for a song sequence. They all fit together, but I had to wait for a song sequence because that was going to be the outline for the story that I was going to write. The final packaging of ***Obsolete*** has a movie script that reads along with the lyrics. It's like a little graphic novel that **Dave McKeen** and I did. When I had the song sequence, I had my outline, then I wrote the movie script, so I worked completely backwards.

So, not only do you undertake the most difficult task, but you do it the most difficult way imaginable.

It's the only way that I know how to work!

Is the process something that leaves you both mentally and physically tired after it is all done?

Completely! I finished it the day before I left on this promotional tour, and during the time I was writing this story, through stress or something, my jaw locked up. I don't know what happened. I thought I had tetanus or mono or something. I went to the doctor and got blood tested for everything and it showed negative for everything, so I guess it was all stress. I had this anomaly built up in my jaw so bad, that I couldn't eat, I couldn't chew it hurt so bad. It wasn't until about 2 weeks later that the pain finally left. The stress was finally gone. We were rehearsing in Amsterdam before Ozz-Fest and during that, whatever pressure was there, suddenly dislodged and it was like, "Wow."

Was it the Prozac that somebody prescribed for you?

Yeah, I wish! No, no Prozac.

Now that FEAR FACTORY has established itself, do you see the band following in any particular direction or is that something that's determined by the way you feel at the time?

The only line I see us taking is one that moves forward. There's no telling what the next record is going to sound like. The song "Resurrection" is, probably, the most mature song that we've ever done and maybe it'll be a step forward from there, it's hard to say. We don't follow a line.

Just what you're feeling at the time.

Yeah, right. It will always be in a **FEAR FACTORY** vein.

I don't think I've ever heard a record as heavy and also have a string section on it. Who decided to bring in the strings?

That was our producer, **Rhys Fulber**. When we were writing the record in Los Angeles, he was actually down there with us co-producing. That was the first time that we've ever had that. He brought us the idea about bringing in a string section. He was like, "I think I'll bring in a real string section in here. I think that it'll make it a lot fuller sounding and not so thin. It'll bring back this human element to it." We were like, "Cool." When we got up to Vancouver, we worked it out and he met with the arranger and they worked out a string piece for "Resurrection" and "Timeless" and it worked out. That was a great experiment because there aren't many bands using strings. There are no heavy bands, or any other kinds of bands using strings nowadays, so we thought that would set us apart in at least one area.

Definitely. What I dig about it, is that it wasn't used as a ballad, so you could have a radio single.

No, we definitely didn't use it as a ballad. It's just a **FEAR FACTORY** song. We still have the heavy riffs and the heavy groove, but the melody is still there as well.

You've expanded your frontiers into other areas like CD ROM games.

That's definitely an avenue that a lot of bands haven't discovered yet. It opens the door to so many more people that you don't realize. Our drummer is a video game fanatic and he's the one who pursued it. He's the one who hooked us up with this video game "Messiah." He's friends with the guy who's designing it, and the guy is, basically, a **FEAR FACTORY** fan as well, and he was like, "Why don't you guys give us a song for it?" So, while we were in the studio, we wrote a song for it and it's called "Messiah" and it's exclusive to the video game. There are 8 other **FEAR FACTORY** songs on it as well, and it's going to be available for PC, Sony Play Station and Sega.

That is cool. There are a lot of bands who've a lot going on, both musically and lyrically, that would lend itself to stuff like that, but you don't see too many of them actually getting into it.

The game is a memory adventure game like, "Doom," "Tomb Raider" and "Resident Evil" and that kind of stuff. The main character is a cherub named "Bob," who has to find the levels and the pieces that he's looking for. He needs to posses, like, 40 other characters in the video game to finish the game. That's cool and it's going to come out later this year.

When I spoke with Dino last year he told me about his movie debut. Have you had the chance to get into a porn movie yourself yet?

No, it's something we decided wouldn't be a very good idea for **FEAR FACTORY**.

Why was that?

It's not what **FEAR FACTORY** is about and, I don't know, I don't condemn porn, but I definitely don't buy it.

Really?

I don't have a problem with it, but when it's so heavily construed with the band, then I have a problem, because to me, that's not what **FEAR FACTORY** is about.

Since you've done the graphic novel, and there are all of these concepts around, have you ever given thought to doing a longer form video or maybe a live concert video?

We're definitely considering that, it's going to be a matter of time until we have it figured out. We'd like to explore other things and bring in the visuals. And why not? It seems to be the only thing missing now. We've written this concept and all someone needs to do is make it into a movie.

I know that time is short, but before you go I want to ask you about having had the chance to work with GARY NUMAN on a version of "Cars." How did that come to pass?

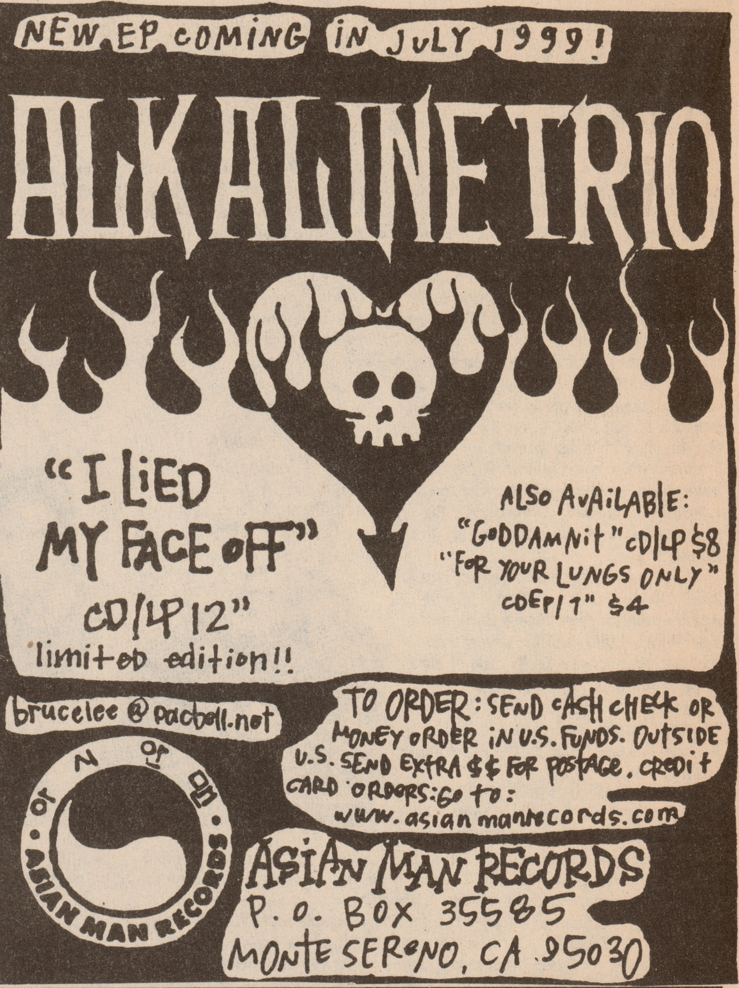
Oh man, that was amazing. We started covering "Cars" [around] '96 in Europe as an encore. It came out cool, it sounded good and the word got around that we were doing it and someone got us in contact with Gary's manager. When we were in London last year, his manager came to meet us and he talked with us and Rhys. Basically, he said that when we were in the studio to give him a call and "We will fly [Gary] out." We told him that we wanted to cover "Cars", and he flew out for 3 days and was in the studio for one, and watching him do it....wow! We stuck, pretty much, to the original idea of "Cars" we didn't mutilate it or anything like that. Gary was in the studio singing along and it was like, "He sounds the same! It's **GARY NUMAN**!" I had the chance to tell him that the first time I'd heard "Cars", I was in Boy Scout camp in 1980! He was like, "Oh God." We knew that "Cars" wasn't going to be on the record, because it doesn't really fit with the concept, but it's going to be a "B" side. While he was here, I had the chance to get him to do a spoken word thing for the intro to "Obsolete." It wasn't until after the fact that I realized that **GARY NUMAN** is one of the forefathers of electronic music, and here he is 20 years later saying on our record that "man is obsolete." I was like, "Maybe it's partially your fault!" There's definitely irony there.

it's only rock 'n' roll

THE COLUMN THAT DOESN'T TREAT THE STARS IN THE KINDEST OF WAYS

Bob Toole

So, The Police, sans Sting, are reforming and doing dates in South America with aims of an album out next year. Who's going to sing? You know why there's no mention of any shows here in the States or England? Because intelligent people in major industrial countries wouldn't pay to see these white reggae thieves rehash the "hits" ... It appears we'll be seeing new albums from Jefferson Starship and Lynyrd Skynyrd this summer (likely on the heels of outdoor theater shows comboed with the usual geezer acts playing for baby-boomers who won't give up their white collar jobs, but still wish "things were different") Wait a minute. Did someone forget to tell those fat long-haired bastards from Skynyrd that the party's over? That no one could get arsed about Southern Rock? Didn't these guys get the hint when the plane went down? ... Dixie Chicks doing ads for Candies Shoes in 'Rolling Stone'? How 'bout Dixie Chicks doing 1-on-1 phone fantasy ads in the back of some behind-the-counter mag? ... Woodstock '99 is set for Vienna, NY in July. Headlining? Metallica. What connection does Metallica have with the original event? Don't bugger me with this idea that they embody the same spirit as so many of the acts that played the original event (right, Lars is a free-thinking gent like Jerry Garcia). Drop bombs on upstate New York now before anyone has a chance to say "Welcome, people, to the concert event of the summer" ... Memo to Alanis Morissette, re: the Grammys. You need to shave your forearms before going out in public.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Live

ICED EARTH ANVIL JAG PANZER THE QUIET ROOM

I-ROCK DETROIT 2-20-99

If it were to be totaled, there was probably a century's worth of musical experience spread across the I-Rock stage this evening. Unfortunately, roughly 100 metalheads actually made it in to see the gig, due mainly to the complete lack of any advance promotion by the club. Equally unfortunate, is the fact that there aren't many clubs in the Detroit area that would stage a metal show like this in the first place, so, for now, metro Detroit metal mavens must keep a keen ear out for shows of this nature. Still, 100 people did get a show full of the best that the underground has yet produced.

The Quiet Room is a progressive metal unit who recently released their debut disc, Introspect on Metal Blade. The CD, like their show, is filled with all of the trappings of Dream Theater-styled progressive metal, but with a distinctively harder edge. They were on stage for about 25 minutes due to the sheer bulk of the bill, but still managed to impress with numbers like, "Grudge" and "A Different Scene." Their drummer, Mike Rice, is a phenomenal talent and made his presence felt with his astounding "in the pocket" performance.

Jag Panzer was [and remains] the true reason for my attendance. I love what the rest of the bands are doing, but J.P. is the single most exciting band to have caught my attention in recent years. Their history dates back to the early-80s, coinciding with the "New Wave of British Heavy Metal" (the standard by which most metal is now measured) yet it has been their two most recent records, The Fourth Judgement and The Age of Mastery that have cemented their position in the metal pantheon. Aggressive and technical music performed with a sense of spirit that is inescapably infectious. From the instant that Harry "The Tyrant" Conklin led his "Panzer Division" to the stage, it was obvious that this was a "true" metal band. No rapping or homeboy posing, just "leather-n-studs music" to bang your head to for the next hour. Just as they should have, J.P. presented their most recent material first. "Iron Eagle" and the incomparable, "Black" greased the wheels while "Twilight Years" stoked the engine to full speed. Occasionally, I had to remind myself that we've entered the final throes of the '90s, but it felt like '82. One could almost picture an early Iron Maiden on stage, before their full metal explosion. Conklin is a dead ringer for Paul Dianno. No need for nostalgia when you have the real thing right here in front of you so, back to the future. J.P. continued on, through songs new and old, "Shadow Thief," "Viper" and a selection from the band's embryonic stage (can't recall the name, sorry) were followed by set closer "The Moors." The latter number coming from the Age of Mastery record, do get this one if you consider yourself any kind of metal fan.

Anvil brought their title, "Wildest Band in Canada," with them on this short tour of the US. This is one of those bands that, amazingly, never quite happened when they made their first run at it in the '80s. They received a bit more acceptance in Europe where, I'm told, they still have a very faithful and expanding following. After watching these veterans bash it out for nearly an hour, it's easy to see why bands like Metallica, Pantera and Monster Magnet have cited Anvil as an influence. I would've liked to have heard "Mad Dog" but with all the other golden nuggets cast from the stage who could complain?

Iced Earth put on their usual classic metal-inspired set, complete with audience-requested regulars intermeshed with their own personal favorites. The group managed to completely reinvent Black Sabbath's classic, "Electric Funeral" [not an easy task to conceive, let alone attempt]. The result was a respectable approximation of the original yet every ounce an I.E. song. These fellows have been through town so often, and their set is fairly well known, that I won't repeat it again here. I will say that it was another above par performance for the band.

4 bands / 4 hours of some of the best independent metal that can be seen on any stage in the world and only 100 people to see it. Shame on the club for being so passive in their promotions and cheers to the next wave of power metal both foreign and domestic! – ***David Lee***.

HUGH CORNWELL

THE SHELTER DETROIT, MI 3-12-99

Who'd a thunk it? Back in the days of yore, **Hugh Cornwell**'s Stranglers were broadly perceived as one of those "ominous", "dangerous" bands, almost as legendary for their (bad) attitude as for their music - rock 'n' roll supercreeps, a hard-edged outfit by even punque standards. So how did it come to this? Mr. Meninblack, Herr Cornwell, is now gray-haired, suit-clad, dignified Gentleman Hugh, who takes to the stage armed only with his Telecaster, an amplified acoustic, and primordial-looking Vox amp to perform mellow-cized renditions of Stranglers faves as well as his own fairly delicate - and occasionally even balladesque / sentimental - solo numbers.

If you needed any particular proof that 1999 is a world away from those heady, angst drenched days of early punque, this should suffice. Fearsome Hugh has gone all polite on us. But the music isn't suffering for it.

Hugh Cornwell

Looking for all the world like an Anglican church usher, Cornwell stands stock-still under the spotlights, eyes clenched shut as if he's trying to imagine himself away to some other space-time coordinate. Cornwell sings old favorites, "Goodbye Toulouse," "Hanging Around" and "Get A Grip On Yourself." Before him, the modest crowd of 30 – 1/3 old-time Stranglers fans, 1/3 curious or familiar with the solo Cornwell and 1/3 simply happen-to-be-heres - watches and listens quietly. "You're very quiet, aren't you?," he asks between songs, with some measure of incredulity. Indeed, the crowd of half-dead by the look of them, save for a couple of jarringly-yowling "I'm your REAL fan" types, who insist on mouthing or bellowing all the lyrics, or barking out requests.

Perhaps no one was really listening. Who could tell? But if they were, they heard Hugh Cornwell, esq., in the finest voice and in firm command of material and instrument (a few glaring guitar blunders notwithstanding). The lead-singer-goes-solo schtick usually results in varying degrees of disaster -- Neil Youngs, for instance, are born, not made -- but, Cornwell's got what it takes to pull it off with almost perfect aplomb. Absent the band, his voice steps back from its timeless bellow, becoming instead an expressive, precise instrument; the actual poignancy of many of his lyrics and the simple, understated artfulness of his melodies take on a form of life impossible in a band setting. It's not the Stranglers, and it's not the Hugh of old, but it is something perfectly appropriate: a genuinely talented solo artist, blessed with a singular style and the perspective of maturity. And that's plenty good enough. ***David B. Livingstone***.

MARION DE LAAT HEART + HAND

YMCA ARTS CENTER DETROIT 4-3-99

Having had just read E. Annie Proulx's *Accordion Crimes,* hearing the accordion-heavy jazz of Tin Hat Trio over the speakers at Barnes & Noble and acquiring the Ellipsis Art's accordion compilation *Squeezebox Planet*, which includes a "new music" piece by Pauline Oliveros, this was a serendipitous concert, presented by the New Music Society. As it was explained to me, the New Music Society is basically 4 guys who love music. "To join, all you have to do is be willing to lose money. It's a reverse pyramid scheme. The more people in the society, the less money you lose." They call famous musicians and ask if they wish to play in Detroit. If yes, they raise funds and import the artist. The emphasis is on new music and avant-garde jazz; in an effort to bring different, interesting, exciting, exotic music to the vast cultural wasteland that is the Midwest. This time they presented **Marion de Laat**, Dutch conceptualist and accordion player, student of Frederick Rzewski, Dick Raaijmakers, John Cage and member of the W.O.R.M. Ensemble. She is virtually unknown outside of the Netherlands, though she has played a few dates in San Francisco before gracing Detroit.

The venue, the YMCA Arts Center, is a rather dumpy building in the middle of renovation. There's masking tape everywhere, multi-colored primer blotches, missing molding and switch plates. We're in what is obviously a classroom. A black cloth serves as a backdrop also blocks the light from the windows.

I overheard wonderful and amazing tidbits about art, while waiting for the performance to start or a chance to speak to the artist. Not this time. Problem #1: Marion de Laat is very soft spoken. Problem #2: de Laat has a heavy Dutch accent. Problem #3: Most of de Laat's well-wishers are fluent in her language. Damn! I left sadly discouraged as they yapped away in Dutch.

The show began with the performance art piece "Broken Tango," a collaboration by Detroit's **Heart + Hand**: dance by Jeremy Kallio and music by Warren Defever. The lighting guy turned on 4 flood lamps facing the audience, blinding us. Smoking isn't allowed in the building, however some beat-witch, who's never heard of the EPA, lit up a stalk of incense, irritating the crowd with bellowing clouds of stinky smoke. Kallio, under a colorful quilted sheet, moved about. As the sheet rose, he forced his way through an opening. Oh goody, a birth concept piece. He ran to the rear of the room, puts the sheet over the head of some poor woman [who probably never did him any harm], before running back to the stage and fidgeting like a caffeine fiend on crack. The amplifiers started to buzz and crackle, as the volume exceeded the speaker rating. Eternity became a palpable concept as this piece relentlessly continued and answered the musical question: "Why do most folks hate performance art?"

of their new CD, Wake the Dead, a reissue of their vinyl releases from 15-17 years ago. N.M. used to frequently play Token Joe's in the early '80s (then called "Scorgies"). This night ,the original members, save the lead singer (sadly he wasn't available, but they did get a suitable replacement), reunited to play a short set of their classic tunes. N.M. started off with the song "Garden of Delight', a cut from their first EP, They Walk Among You, a psychedelic, sci-fi inspired song. They moved through another 5 or so ominous songs from their first EP with a few tracks' from their early singles thrown in for good measure. N.M. closed their set with a cover of the old garage rock song "Gloria." A great reunion performance.

Gaylord was up next; they were decent. They didn't hold my attention too well. Gaylord plays funky rock-n-roll and, unfortunately, a lot of the songs sound very similar.

The Al Beaman Band ended the night with their somewhat poppy punk set. A hyper pack of guys, they were jumping all over the stage. They put on a good show. The band whipped through their set without slowing down, and the audience went along with them. This was the perfect band to close out the night. They were fun and crazy; I wouldn't mind seeing these guys again someday. ***Stefan Peterson***.

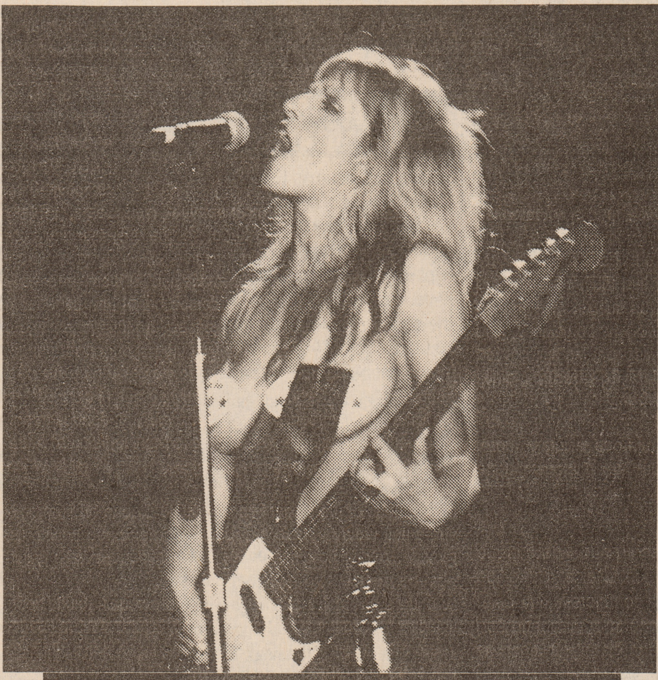
THE DETROIT MUSIC AWARDS
STATE THEATRE DETROIT, MI 4-23-99

The Detroit Music Awards were held in April and, to no surprise, it turned out to be an entertaining night. A slew of Detroit radio and news personalities came to present the awards to be given to Detroit's finest musicians.

Chuck Burns
SPEEDBALL

This year the Distinguished Achievement awards were presented to jazz trumpeter **Marcus Belgrave**, Motor City DJ the **Electrifying Mojo** and **The Romantics**. We were also treated to a 7 minute film trailer for the movie production of: MC5: A True Testimonial.

The live performances this year were pretty diverse. From the funk and gospel sounds of the 17-piece **Derrick Starks and Today's Generation** straight to the 3-way raw sounds of the **Demolition Dollrods**. For the old timers, an appearance by **The Miracles** [featuring only one original member, singer / songwriter **Bobby Rogers**]. It should also be noted that it was the Motown sound that brought the audience to its feet. "Tears of A Clown," "I Second That Emotion" and "Ooh, Baby Baby" sounded tight and Rogers was obviously having a good time.



Margaret Dollrod

There was also loud applause for a short set by **Stewart Francke** for a return to the stage after an illness. The singer / songwriter was presented with the special achievement award for his *Stewart Francke Leukemia Foundation*.

The presenters featured the likes of **John Badanjek** (Detroit Wheels, Rockets) and **Richard Wagner** (The Bossmen). Wagner plugged his upcoming **Frost** reunion at Harpo's. Too bad the award organizers overlooked this one. It would have been great to see the Frost make a surprise appearance. Telegraph? I don't get it.

Scott Morgan (Rationals) was in attendance in hopes of winning for best CD reissue for the **Sonic Rendezvous Band**. Former '60s rock promoter Dave Leone was on hand to accept for the **Howling Diablos** for best live act. **Jim McCarty** (The Rockets) won outstanding blues recording for **Mystery Train**'s "Live" disc. Former **MC5** drummer **Dennis Thompson** was checking out the MC5 clip from the audience.

The Romantics portion of the show had to be the highlight of the evening, even if it came off as a bit unorganized. A lengthy introduction by DJ **Steve Kostan** ran into a set by **Telegraph**, who did a loud version of the Romantics' "Girl Next Door." We were then treated to a 5-minute video retrospective with cool clips on *Soul Train, American Bandstand* and MTV.

The Romantics approached the stage to accept the award with all members **Rich Cole**, **Coz Canlor**, **Mike Skill** and frontman **Wally Palmer**. Drummer **Jimmy Marinos** was absent, putting a damper on the idea that the band would perform live. The **Suicide Machines** ended the tribute with a punked up "What I Like About You" that brought Wally from the wings to add the memorable harmonica solo. It was a shame that the band didn't do a live set. Really, after all these years it was their night.

The Demolition Dollrods performed some new material from their upcoming Matador release. Margaret, Christine and Danny used "As Seen in Metro Times" bumper stickers for tassels this time. A little gospel number at the end featured an accompaniment from a saxophonist. Good to see that the band is in good form and [I'm] anxiously waiting to hear the new disc.

Some of the other award winners were hard rockers, **Speedball**, rapper **Kid Rock** winning both national single and album. **The Luddites** were also big winners with the best recording and band deserving more recognition. Others who took home awards were **The Articles**, **Knee Deep Shag**, **Jere Stormer** and, of course, **Eminem**.

To bring the star-studded evening to an end was writer **Elmore Leonard**'s announcement of the best band name. "And the winner is, **Immortal Winos of Soul**". ***David McLaughlin***

KID ROCK
THE INTERSECTION GRAND RAPIDS, MI 4-23-99

This one sold out quickly and I got left out cuz I didn't even try. However, a mere 5 minute trip down to the bar at 8pm netted a ticket for face value of $10 without hardly any effort. For some reason, a lot of people felt it necessary to stand in a line that stretched around the block so they could get in at 9pm to sit around and drink and smoke for 3 hours until **Kid Rock** went on. I went and did other things and showed up at 11:30pm at which point the Kid had just started.

The place was packed beyond belief, and there was no chance of getting up front without a lot of work. People were being thrown out of the machine of body sardines and landing in the back of the bar with little birdies swimming around their heads. They were drenched with sweat. Apparently there was a lot going on up front with people jumping the barricades and tipping over monitors.

Around 45 minutes into his incredible set, some jackass threw a beer right in Kid's face and soaked him. He stopped the show and walked off. I went outside and stayed for over an hour trying to get a copy of the old Kid Rock **ETCH Magazine** signed. I heard all kinds of stories from the inept security staff who felt it was their job to lie to me and tell me that Kid left in a small van and went to the hotel. I finally got to talk to the tour manager and he was kind enough to take the mag into the large tour bus and get it signed.

To Kid Rock, I apologize for the fact that Grand Rapids sucks and is full of morons. I hope you never play The Intersection again. If you do play here again, I saw this thing in the Blues Brothers where they had a stage with a fence in front of it. This may help. ***CBH3***.

KENT POPPA VEGAS
THE INTERSECTION GRAND RAPIDS, MI
4-24-99

Kent is my favorite freakin' band of the moment, even though their album came out months ago and I picked it up in the "Great Wasteland of Unknown Music - The **ETCH** Dungeon." This show at the Intersection found my buddy Gerard and I quaffing whiskeys from an area known as Kentucky. Some band warmed up before Kent, but who cares. Seeing Kent live absolutely convinced me that these guys mean business and have that "vibe" like they know what they are doing. Oh yeah, they are from Sveden. Please to help me with my Roke Sack!

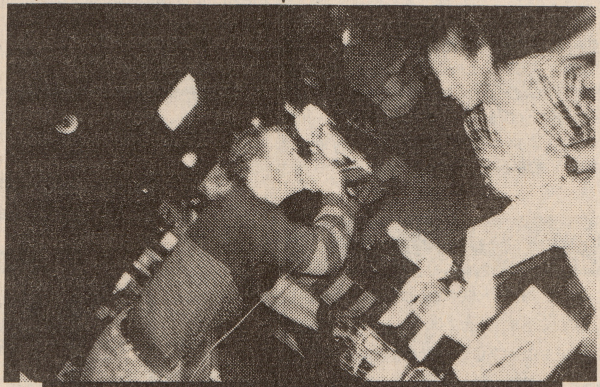
I'm not crappin' you negatory, Kent is freakin incredible. They're everything a band should be in my opinion and they are on a "breakin' it big" adrenaline rush and put out 150% of raw energy and excitement at their shows. They believe in their music and still like to play it. I could mention some bands that they sound like but that would spoil everything. Read the CD review in this issue to find out more. They filled my soul with hope, either that or it was

De Laat opened with a sound poetry tape piece, entitled "Networm," but immediately a problem arose. The tape was so soft, that a local radio station's signal jammed the sound system. I remember how this was a problem when I lived a few blocks from this location and the local jazz station would do the same to my stereo. I'd put on soft folk ballads and underneath, through the gentle voices, blared the irritating "oot-ta-lee-oot-ta-lee" wail of horrid improvisational saxophone. So "Networm" had to be shelved. Just as well, I've found that it's hard to appreciate taped pieces without visuals involved, it's like staring at the wall. This is a performance?

Next was "Tweeling" ["Twins"], a performance combined with video. De Laat strapped on a huge, black Hohner accordion that seemed as big as she. She has black hair, wore a black top, black pants, black boots and played her black accordion against a black backdrop; all you could see was her face, hands and the white accordion buttons. Beside her were three large screen televisions, mounted one atop the other with images of de Laat on video. The top screen featured her head, the middle her torso and accordion and the bottom her feet. She played Doppler-effect sounds, mixed with odd satellite beeps, playing the same music as the video, slightly out-of-synch, as the live performance seemed to follow the taped performance. Curiously, she actually seemed to be reading the sheet music in front of her to perform these various squeaks and squawks.

"Vergeet-me-nietje" ["Forget-me-not"] featured live music conversing with a human voice on tape. She pumped the instrument creating "dragon-breathing" sounds, as the bellows huffed and puffed, but none of the keys were pressed. The voice on the tape gurgles, barks and lurches through phrase fragments. As the tempo increased, it sounded like dolphins speaking. Another piece, "Stills," ran a tape of bells / chimes and voices played backwards, as she clicked and clacked the accordion's buttons, as if the accordion was a percussive instrument.

As I left, the concert presenter was downstairs at the exit. Here is a guy who loves the music so much, that he's losing money presenting these artists. He doesn't even get to fully enjoy them, as he must tend the admissions table, handle the set up, do the accounting and misses the end of the show, standing by the exit to make sure the door closes behind us and locks, because it's a rough neighborhood. He asked my opinion of the show. As we talked, he also asked other concert-goers their opinions. The predominate conclusion was the opening performance piece was crap. "[Marion de Laat] is too talented and beautiful a musician to have to perform after that," said a handsome, gray-haired gentleman. His comrades all nodded in agreement. Me too. ***Allen Salyer***.



Marc Mazinga reaches out to touch someone

ADAM WEST BANANA FISH ZERO TSB PAYBACK
THE VELVET LOUNGE WASHINGTON, DC 4-10-99

I drove 8 hours from Ann Arbor to see this show, the CD release gig for **Adam West**'s new CD 13 Deluxe. It was well worth the drive.

The first band to hit the stage was **TSB Payback**. A sloppy, noisy, garage-sounding band. One of the first things I thought was cool, was that the guitarist was playing one of those see-through Plexiglas guitars, like Greg Ginn [Black Flag] used to. The singer gripped the mic stand and shouted through the songs, while the guitarist decided to stagger around the tiny room like a robot. They were a good band to see live, while their performance didn't blow me away, it was still entertaining.

Next up, **Banana Fish Zero**, who got boring pretty fast. They reminded me of not-so-interesting college rock. So I opted to hang out outside the front of the club and get hassled by every street bum that passed by.

Last up was the mighty **Adam West**. This show was advertised as having "giveaways, go-go girls, and Jake's crotch", the only thing missing was the go-go girls. I was a little disappointed, but once A.W. began playing the go-go girls no longer mattered. A.W. kicked into their heavy rockin' song 'Platinum' to start the set off. A.W. was fast-n-wild, and didn't let up until the set was over, except for when they paused every now and again to talk to the crowd. While I do know that Jake, A.W.'s lead 'throat' man, is influenced by glam acts like Kiss and the MC5, I don't think calling this a 'glam' show is the right way to put it. It was more of just an in-your-face show. These guys just couldn't stop rockin'.

After all was said and done, the crowd demanded one more song, and encore. Thus A.W., quick to please, pull out their cover of Black Sabbath's "Supernaut." A.W. was also nice enough to dedicate a Radio Birdman cover ("Burned My Eyes") to those of us who drove from Ann Arbor. If A.W. comes near your town, take the time to go check 'em out. It'll be fun. ***Stefan Peterson***.

MERCURY REV JASON FALKNER
MILL ST. ENTRY PONTIAC, MI 4-16-99

First of all, I wasn't sure if the indie rock police were going to let me in. Being that I am currently sporting a beard, I came prepared with my Sleater-Kinney shirt on. Upon inspection at the door, I was allowed access in to witness an "out of this world performance" from **Mercury Rev**. All the indie rock gods were present. You had your Jon Spencer guy. You had J. Mascis and Lou Barlow types. Your friendly neighborhood Steve Malkmus gents were there. And of course don't forget, The Reverend Horton Heat disciples were present also. Hell, even the Michael Stipe-looking guy showed up. Must have been based solely on past indie creed.

If you've never been to the Mill Street Entry, it's basically Clutch Cargo's "kid brother." Located underneath Cargo's, Mill St. has a "basement feel" to the surroundings. We purposely tried to arrive late in hopes of missing the opening act, but were unsuccessful. **Jason Falkner** reminded me of Matthew Sweet. Some of his songs were pretty good, but it was basically background noise while I sipped my Newcastle.

Wading in a sea of vastly changing colors, Mercury Rev came onstage to take everybody on a psychedelic noise ride. Subdued but chaotic, every one of Mercury Rev's songs ended with pure brilliance. Nothing but crystal clear radiance beamed from the stage. Drawing mainly on a set list comprised of their first album, as well as their newest, Deserter's Songs. Many wondered how Mercury Rev would pull the complex arrangements of their songs off; but that was laid to rest about one second into their first song. Complete with 2 guitars, bass, drums, keyboards, theramin and even a mellatron. Their encore was one of the night's highlights, covering a John Lennon song, and "2000 Man" by the Rolling Stones. I bet that sure put a big ol' thorn in the side for some. Folks, If Mercury Rev is ever kind enough to grace us with their presence again, try not to miss the opportunity. I am guaranteed it will be one of the best live shows you've ever seen. Hell, if you come looking like one of the Tortoise guys you might even get in for free. ***Chris Wardell***.

THE AL BEAMAN BAND GAYLORD NEW MATH
MAZINGA MIDNIGHT DRAGONZ
TOKEN JOE'S ROCHESTER, NY 4-17-99

The **Midnight Dragonz** were first this night. They had a weird funky-rap-hard rock-metal thing going. I wasn't incredibly impacted by their performance. For one, the music seemed to lack focus. They didn't interest me.

Mazinga, the heavy rock and rollers from Michigan were the second band to rock out at this show. Mazinga played a great, lively set. Marc the lead singer got off the stage and got up in anyone and everyone's face this night. The rest of the band kept things going on stage with their intensity and high energy level. Mazinga certainly put on a great performance for the crowd, and the crowd really seemed to enjoy it. Mazinga isn't a band to be missed. Check 'em out when they play in your area.

New Math was the third band. This was their reunion show, to promote the release

NEW MATH

the liquid from Kentucky mixed with the sounds of Kent. Either way, they were great!

Oh yeah, **Poppa Vegas** played a good show considering they are the second band to emerge from Grand Rapids to win a big record deal and write a hit song. Saw some big wigs hangin' out, including Aris and Blackie (with a nice suit and new face) lookin' pretty sharp. Rumor has it that Anthony (his son) from the Chilli Peppers was rather helpful in securing the "big deal" and now these guys have a full-size tour bus and spiked up hair. ***CBH3***.

THE GROOVIE GHOULIES THE EYELINERS TRASH BRATS
THE SHELTER DETROIT, MI 5-8-99

We walked in the door as the **Trash Brats** were finishing their set, so I missed them for the second time. I've met various members on numerous occasions [they were cool], which is reason enough to check out any band. **The Eyeliners** from New Mexico are a 3-piece that play music that's somewhere between power pop and pop punk. They have a fun, cute stage presence and feel. Their songs weren't very memorable with the exception of "Do the Zombie" from their excellent 7" of the same title.

The Groovie Ghoulies were who I was there to see and, like the 4 times I've seen them in the past 2 or 3 years, they rocked. I have been a little disappointed in their current album, but their live show, their energy and their interaction with the fans is still top notch. They played a set drawing on material from their past releases as well as from the new album. Highlights included their opening number "Devils Town" better than the original cover, "Blood Beach" from their first album. Lead singer Kepi's singing the harmony from the "Banana Splits Theme," and the 2 best tracks from their current album "lonely planet boy" and "fun in the dark." I highly recommend seeing these guys, they are one of the best bands touring today. ***Mystery Writer***.

THE PORTERS TEENAGE FRAMES 12 ANGRY STEPS
MAGIC STICK DETROIT MI 5-16-99

Arriving at the club that has, supposedly, over taken the Shelter as the "in place" on weeknights, it was nice to get in on the guest list, thanks Karp. First up was **12 Angry Steps**. They weren't bad, but not tremendously good either. Kudos for the cover of Dead Boys' "Sonic Reducer." Average garage / alt. / pop. I guess that retro thing has finally permeated Motown.

Chicago's **Teenage Frames** quickly followed. If you missed them, shame on you. Sure, the lead singer looks like a heroin addict, but his moves...damn. Think late 70's glam [re: NY Dolls]. Kick ass punk rawk, as entertaining a band as you'll see, now featuring ex-Monkey Chunk axe-man Ted on bass. I could tell you how important bands of this caliber are to music today, but I'd be selling them short. If you want authentic 70's punk, you'll have to see them.

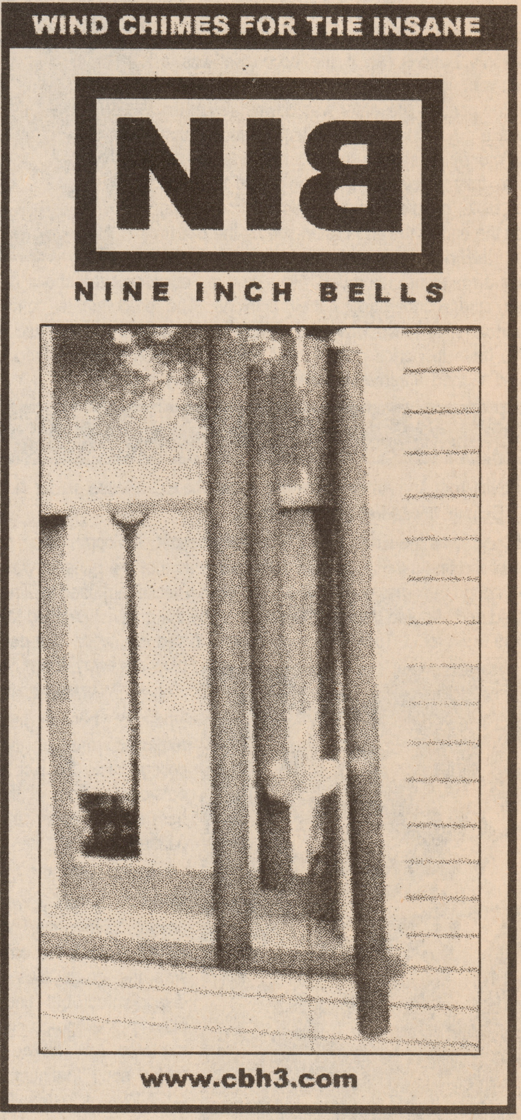
Up next, **The Porters**. If you think white boys can't play soul music [a la 1962], then you're wrong. Think Blues Brother's outtakes and you'll have this band's thing down. A fun, happy band that you'd like to have play more often. Energy, with 4 horns and the balls to back them up, and not a hint of ska, unlike their old roots. Not 100% my fave band that night, but these boys will be huge one day, if they ever lose the humbleness. ***P. Hahn***.

THE LEAVING TRAINS HONEYBURST
THE MAGIC STICK DETROIT, MI 5-27-99

There were 3 bands on this bill, but I missed the first one. (That's what I get for riding downtown with 2 of the Trash Brats. Just kidding.) Luckily, I didn't miss the second, as it was Pittsburgh's **Honeyburst**. Frontman and former Get Hip Cynic, Michael K., is about as manic as they come, the kind of guy who would prefer sitting around listening to Television or Wire over having sex any day. At one point—in the midst of some really solid songs—he began yelling about school kids who kill their classmates. And I'm not sure what that was all about, just that his on-stage presence can keep a person interested even when he's pushing the envelope a bit. He ran off stage with a mic, pushing one side of the small standing crowd over to one side with the heavy black cord. His waif-ish body moved with Mick Jagger-ish convulsions, and he had that frighteningly genuine I'm-the-crazy-guy look, sort of like the Lucky Charms guy possessed by the soul of Ozzy. Overall, the band reeks of pure intentions: Hey, I know, let's just play some rock-n-roll! Not very fashionable these days. But it works for me. And for those it doesn't satisfy due to a lack of MTV polish, the band's own imprint Get Bent says it best. The **Leaving Trains** is headed by Falling James—that night in a very short spandex dress adorned with a red plastic heart pin that blinked. A heart-throb he isn't, but a fine player of music and very outrageous presidential candidate he is. He probably knows more about world politics than Bill Clinton and his cabinet put together. And just think of the possibilities for his campaign motto. REAL MEN WEAR FISHNETS, ONLY PUSSIES SMOKE CIGARS. In any case, The Leaving Trains have undergone many line-up changes in their 15-year existence. And even if James does become president, they can stop here if they want. Warrior Princess / guitarist, Melanie Vammen (ex-Muffs), and bassist, Miss Koko Puff (ex-Sluts for Hire), flank the lovely James strongly, 2 goddess-like pillars capable of holding him up should he fall over. This is women who rock AND the men who dress like them. Koko Puff stepped up to the mic for a quick version of "Ice Cream Truck," which rang a few bells in the audience. The epic-length tune called something like "Rocknroll Murder" was an experience to hold your pee for (in fact, I did). The song led to a lesson in world politics and a mini-monologue on bombing Kosovo. I guess being really smart sometimes means just realizing how stupid everything is. All hail the rock-n-roll clowns. ***Norene Cashen***.

BLACK TAPE FOR A BLUE GIRL TRAUMACOIL
SUBCULTURE GRAND RAPIDS, MI 5-17-99

To have Tool killing Radiohead on a stage before an ambient / Goth / darkwave band is supposed to play to a Goth crowd is a bad idea. **Traumacoil** was good, but Subculture needs to look at their bookings a little closer. While I'm bitching, there were these 3 chicks sitting at a table and gossiping, very loudly during **Black Tape For A Blue Girl**'s performance. Whoever the 3 of you are, you should apologize to the band. Sorry... **Lisa Freuer** was really nice to me. At the mention of my god's name, they let me in [*And to think that I wasted all that time on the phone getting you a press pass*, ed.]...but my ride had to pay, so we split the $8 ticket price and proceeded to start sipping whiskey-n-cokes, chatting, until Lisa walked up to us and started apologizing for the fact that my friend had to pay. I quickly told her that it was more than ok by me to have to pay $4 to see them. Other than the three culprits I mentioned earlier, the show was fantastic. **Sam Rosenthal** is a genius at making music, and his talents truly shine. Sam won't take credit for that though, he gives it all to the other 3 members saying the 2 ladies are "vital" to Black Tape. I agree. ***Tom Henton***.



A SHORT HISTORY OF NEW RED ARCHIVES THE RECORD LABEL

Out of the unprecedented melee that racked New York City, setting then mayor [now-TV-court-wench] Ed Koch off like a Texas firecracker, rose *another kind of label*. **UK Subs' Nicky Garratt**, often referred to as the "all-time greatest punk guitarist ever" by kooky kids and inured critics alike, founded **New Red Archives** in response to a "misunderstanding" between the Subs and their label [then], GEM Records.

Garratt's m.o. was to issue the first four UK Subs albums domestically -- ***Another Kind of Blues***, ***Brand New Age***, ***Crash Course*** and ***Diminished Responsibility***, but, fatefully, the licensing deal didn't fly. The first four Subs albums were replaced in the catalog with vinyl releases by **PED**, **Crucial Youth** and **Kraut** as NRA01 through NRA04 respectively -- the Subs' **AWOL** being NRA05. The distribution was exclusively through Caroline Distribution, where Garratt was the warehouse manager.

Garratt signed the legendary **Reagan Youth** in 1988 to a two-album deal. The first, was a reissue of their self-released mini-album ***Youth Anthems for the New Order***, on Dave Dictor's R Radical Records. The re-issue, called ***Reagan Youth Vol. 1***, had three extra tracks and was remixed by Garratt and Dave. The second was all new material, though many of the tracks were written the same time as the material on the mini-album, slowed down a bit. Due to an insatiable drug habit, Dave Insurgent was, at best, sluggish in finishing the album. In the winter of '89, Garratt, a concerned group of friends and band members kidnapped him, and locked him in the studio until he finished the album.

The band's legacy still thrives today, even though the band broke up after Reagan left office. New York's D Generation got their name from the Reagan Youth anthem, "Degenerated." The band still covers that song at many of their shows. More recently, the Beastie Boys, on their *Hello Nasty Tour*, covered several Reagan Youth's hits, sighting the band as a major inspiration.

Crucial Youth's first album, ***Posi-Machine***, was released in 1988 as NRA02 in the catalog, bringing loads of media attention to both the NYC band and to **NRA**. *Spin Magazine* gave them a full-page feature, not fully aware that their hyper straightedge was less than genuine. Apparently, lyrics like, "*Brush away, brush away, brush three times a day*," and "*I'm talking about the four basic kinds of food I Which every balanced diet should include*," didn't tip them off. Even some of their biggest fans were duped. When the band put together a comic booklet [which came free inside the LP], they were planning on making up some funny over-the-top "fan letters." But in the end they didn't have to. Fact, once again, won over fiction as actual letters from kids proved more comic than the band members could possibly invent.

Another New York entity, **Kraut**, approached Garratt to re-release ***An Adjustment to Society***, after having opened for the UK Subs at CBGB's in 1981. These three bands, along with the St. Louis, Missouri's **Ultraman** and New Jersey's **Hogan's Heroes** were the rudimentary elements from which NRA blossomed. After that came, most notably, **Samiam** (demo, s/t), **No Use For A Name** (a gift from Brett Gurewitz), **Christ On A Crutch** and **MDC**. More recent champions include **Swingin' Utters** (first full-length) **Social Unrest**, **Loudmouths**, **Snap-Her** and the ever-popular **Anti-Flag**.

In 1990, Garratt traversed the entire country, settling in LA for three years before moving to San Francisco in '93 to play with art-style band, **10 Bright Spikes**. The band, strictly a studio project, featured an all-star cast: **Jason Honea** (Social Unrest), **Lovely Previn** (daughter of **Andre Previn**), **Dave Ayer** (Samiam) and others. XBS put out several mini-albums and two full-lengths, ***Astro Stukas*** and ***Blueband*** and recorded ***Crime Map***, an album that has never been released due to lack of funding.

Years later, in the spring of '97, the UK Subs re-united for their 20-year anniversary. **Charlie Harper** and **Alvin Gibbs** had flown to San Francisco at the end of '96 to write, rehearse and record 32 songs in three weeks with ex-Samiam drummer, **Dave Ayer**. The tracks were split up into two albums, ***Quintessentials*** (**NRA**) and ***Riot*** (Cleopatra) and rivaled even some of their earlier stuff in terms of vibrancy and integrity. Harper and Gibbs returned to the states Four months later to join Garratt and Ayer and hit the road with the **Anti-Flag** "kids." The two bands complimented each other categorically. Many of the kids, not ever having heard of the old-timers, came specifically to see Anti-Flag and were gleefully bowled over by the UK Subs. Jaded critics and cantankerous punk veterans alike received resuscitating energy from the vital, flag-burning youngsters, and at the end of a very successful tour, Garratt returned to the label revitalized himself -- but certainly not satiated.

Since then, Garratt's signed New Jersey's, **Dehumanized**, who blew him and Anti-Flag's **Justin Sane** away while opening for the band in their home town. Their first EP (s/t) is available now on **NRA** and their full length is coming out soon.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ULTRAMAN

When this vastly underrated band called it quits some years back, **Mark** and **Rob** started **Vent**. **Jon** and **Tim** joined in various St Louis bands. **Matt Smith** has not been heard from for some time, but he did send **NRA** a couple of demos years back. **Mike Story** sadly died of a brain hemorrhage after playing in a succession of bands in San Francisco including **Jack Killed Jill**.

CRUCIAL YOUTH

Allegedly, **Gentleman Jim** is now a missionary in Peru, spreading the positive message to the locals, while **Ollie Grind** and **Maynard Kribbs** are doing the high school lecture circuit as road crossing safety experts. **Melvin Berkley** makes wooden statues of Mr. T and sells them in Hollywood. As for **Joe Crucial**, word has it that he's had extensive plastic surgery to give him the appearance of an elderly Asian woman, and he now lives somewhere in Maylasia.

KRAUT

Donny Cowan is a studio producer, **Johnny Feedback** went to LA, **Doug Holland** was in the **Cro-Mags** and still lives in New York and **Davy Gunner** was with **Rail** and now dings in **Broke**, based in New York.

REAGAN YOUTH

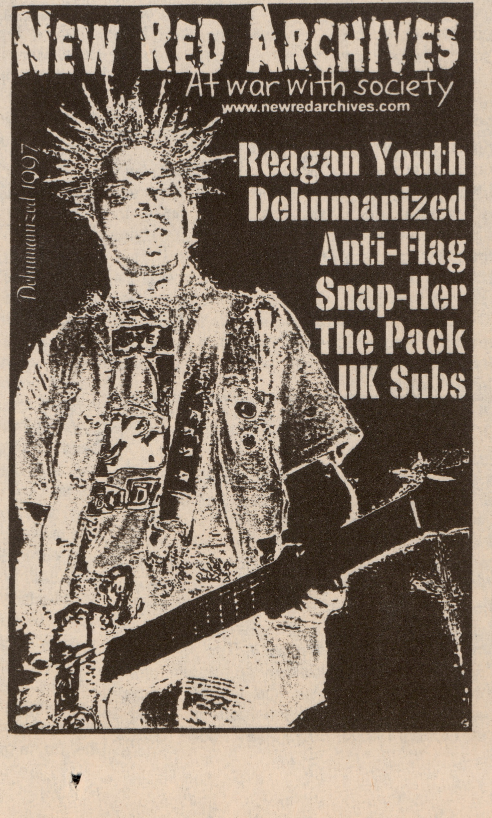
Most know the incredible story of **Dave Insurgent**'s demise. Dave committed suicide after his girlfriend became mass murderer, Joel Rifkin's victim and his mother died in a bizarre accident when his father backed the car into her. Long time partner, **Paul Cripple** had kept a low profile since **House of God**, the band he and Dave started after Reagan Youth broke up. **Al Pike** still plays in New York City and put together the ***Live & Rare*** CD for **NRA**.

CORRUPTED IDEAS

Paul formed **The Neurotones** and lived with **Andi** from **Snap-Her** for a while. **Mike** went off to study classical guitar and is now working on a Ph.D. on that instrument.

SQUAT

It seems they broke up after the European tour. One had and baby, and the others moved to LA, CA.



hear

8 BALL GRIFTERS s/t CD (demo)

Lead crooner / bassist Wade has graduated to his own with this band. Combining the elements of The Deans, surf, and psychobilly I think Wade has come up with a unique sound. Good Lawd, it couldn't happen without the effects of Nuckles and John on their respective instruments (guitar and drums). I am completely amazed at this band's ability to organize themselves. They are so into playing music that they will play anywhere. Contact them: Grftr8ball @ aol.com or 981 Ramblewood Dr. E. Lansing, MI 48823. *Ken Knott*

25 SUAVES s/t CD

Who ever thought that pure, unadulterated noise, captured on CD, could be a migraine free experience, but needs to be put out of their misery? 25 Suaves fall under this category. It would be different if any of these guys -- and girl -- knew how to play their instruments, but rather the whole recording sounds as if they just picked up their instruments and improvised whatever noises they could spit out. Fans of feedback might want to pick this up. [**Bulb**] *Demangis.*

30 LINCOLN Avanti CD

Don't let the pretty-boy packaging fool you, these boys from Cleveland wear their heritage / crown well by delivering this blazing, dirty power-pop with serious mod overtones. True to geography, their music is more Cheetah Chrome than Johnny Thunders. Although, in all honesty, the clean production saves this from clonedom. Regardless, this is a solid release and all you Dead Boys / NY Dolls fans and garage-Mods should take note. [**Johann's Face**] *E. Emmitt.*

ABUSING TROY Guinevere CD

This CD is full of trippy guitar rock that sounds like a million other small-town bands across the country. Adequate playing, but there's absolutely nothing original about this band. Mix a little Pearl Jam, a touch of Dave Matthews and a dollop of the Beatles, blend well and bake at 350 degrees and you've got Abusing Troy. Influences are nice, but they're not supposed to take the place of creativity. I'll pass on this one. *Jamie DePolo.*

ADAM WEST 13 Deluxe CD

I'm surprised I made it past the first track ["Platinum"]. I wanted to put "repeat" on my CD player and listen to it all day. It's got a great guitar riff and interesting lyrics. I love this song. I made it to the rest of the CD, and I'm glad I did. **13 Deluxe** is a great rock album with 13 songs that are heavy and sometimes dirty (musically, not lyrically, you pervert) rock-n-roll. Adam West is one of the few bands that make good, real rock-n-roll these days. Jake Starr's vocals are reminiscent of Glenn Danzig's in his post-Samhain days. The guitars are good-n-heavy, like early to mid-era Soundgarden. There are definitely strong punk / heavy rock influences in these guys. **13 Deluxe** is one of the few albums I've been looking forward to hearing this year [with the Groovie Ghoulies and Electric Frankenstein being the others -- for those keeping score]. **13 Deluxe** flat out rocks. Get this album and check out the songs 'Platinum", "Bounty Hunter," "Vanilla," "Something Wicked" and "Fear For My Life" and decide for yourself. Be warned though, you'll find yourself humming "Vanilla" everywhere you go. Heck, there are songs about guns and songs about chicks on here, it doesn't get much better than this. [**Fandango**] *Stephan Peterson.*

HASIL ADKINS Drinkin' My Life Away CD

Legendary psychobilly (emphasis on "psycho") master Hasil Adkins picked his 13 favorite songs from his vast collection of homemade cassettes and unreleased studio recordings. Starting out in an uncharacteristically melancholy vein with "Missing You Baby," the Haze's standard rocket-fueled groove kicks in on the second track, "Chicken Wobble" and never lets go. Enjoyably low-fi, most of the tracks sound like field recordings – and that's a good thing. If you thought The Cramps, Southern Culture on the Skids and The Flat Duo Jets developed this genre, you need to listen to Adkins. He doesn't just play the music, he lives it. Highly recommended. [**Shake It / Drink 'N Drive**] *Jamie DePolo.*

REX ALLEN The Last of the Great... CD
SPADE COOLEY & THE WESTERN SWING DANCE GANG Shame On You CD

The first irony-free items from the occasionally excellent Bloodshot Records camp are these 2 CDs, part of a "series of unreleased transcription recordings of country music's pioneers." Both are documents of World War II-era country and swing. Rex Allen is a cowboy crooner in the Gene Autry tradition, yodeling smooth sagas of life on the range and love in the bunkhouse. Standout moments include the whoops and hollers in the defiant "I'll Never Change" (a welcome break from Allen's otherwise mannered style) and I love the image of drunken cowboys kicking Satan's ass in "Tyin' Knots In the Devil's Tail." Spade Cooley specializes in western swing instrumentals, hot fiddlin' over jazz licks that are less my bag, although I'm sure devotees of the style will bust guts over it. Great packaging and excellent sound quality make both missives successful ideologically, easily depantsing the likes of ...don't get me started on *that.* [**Bloodshot Revival / Soundies**] *Fred Beldin.*

AMERICAN STONEHENGE Lucidnation CD

With a name like "American Stonehenge," I'd expect a band of Hell's Angels on too much acid, stinking of booze, playing thick fuzzed-out heavy guitars and jamming for 3 days. Instead, we have 3 adults, lookin' "Northwest trendy" possibly armed with Tickle-Me-Elmos, a 2-liter bottle of Pepsi and stickers from the gum machine all in their back pack. The music? Adolescent, dull-witted melodies possibly leaked from the Avengers' first practice. It could be considered cute, but they might get in your face, and that would be pretty funny. (**Brainfloss**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

AM I BLOOD Agitation CD

Here's something different; this band's like early Metallica with Strapping Young Lad mixed in. It's hard to define with its mix of heavy guitars and pop-like melodies, but I think that was the idea from the beginning. They've been compared to Stuck Mojo, Deftones and others of that ilk, but before long these Finnish metalheads will be the standard for comparison. Very interesting indeed, Dr. Rockston! If you're looking for one song to sum up what this band's all about, fast forward straight to "Segregated Holocaust", it contains all of the group's promise within its 4:38. The final analysis? Palatable to many, exciting for some and downright amazing for a few. [**Nuclear Blast America**] *David Lee.*

ANGEL ROT Unlistenable Hymns... CD

Tom Five, founding guitarist of White Zombie, heads up this metal band. In fact, AR plays heavy metal in the "White Zombie vein." The main difference, AR's sound is a bit slower, thicker and sludgier. Unfortunately, AR lacks the catchiness of White Zombie's hooks and clever lyrics. If you're a heavy metal fan, and like the slower bits of the genre, this might be up your ally. However, this release left me bored at times. I would've liked to have heard the band mix it up a little, as the songs tend to sound too similar. [**Man's Ruin**] *S. P.*

ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE So What? (Live) CD

20 years after the real **So What?** was released comes this really fake watered down version. The audience sounds like it is "canned" and the songs sound too slick to be performed live. Seek out earlier recordings from these guys. (**Cleopatra**) *Ken Knott*

APPLES IN STEREO Her Wall Paper CD

Normally, I cringe when hearing a band attempting to sound like The Beatles. There's nothing I loathe more than to see a Beatles song remade by some nameless artist on a TV commercial. While it's difficult to tell if AIS are "trying" to sound like the Beatles, they manage to be the closest to pulling it off that I've ever encountered. **Her Wall Paper** contains songs that seem representative of the Beatles' career, spanning from poppy to psychedelic. The CD comes complete with snippets of looped keyboards used to break up songs. This is designed purely to make one insane. Despite annoying between song material, overall this album is one of the most wonderful things I've heard this year. In addition, I must note that it has the most stellar production just like the Beatles stuff. (**spinArt**) *R. Overmyer.*

THE ASSMEN Enema Nation CD

If the title and front cover of this CD aren't enough to convince you that it's full of rude, obnoxious punk rock, song titles like "Beer is Good Food" and "Adjusting My Nuts" should do the trick. The Assmen remind me of Gang Green and what they might sound like if they were ruder and lower-class. Musically, it's not bad and comes off, at times, sounding like street-punk. I found this CD hilarious, but it's definitely not for the easily offended. [**Dirty**] *Karp.*

NATACHA ATLAS Gedida CD
OSEI TUTU Awakening CD
KALI Francofaune CD

The next time you visit a record store, try this experiment: Walk over to the "World Music" section, close your eyes and grab 3 CD's at random. When you open your eyes, chances are you'll have in your hands recordings from 3 different solo artists you've never heard. They'll probably be pictured on the cover, dressed in the traditional garb of their homeland, with their name and the album title printed in a font that would identify with their respective ethnic heritages. To complete this experiment, unfortunately, you'll have to purchase these CD's. When you get home and listen to them, you'll notice that the music itself is bland and unimaginative. The melodies will be inspired by local folk songs that have been passed down to generations for 100s, even 1000s, of years. Oddly, there's not much of a market for folk songs performed in traditional ways, so modern dance beats and synthesizers [that always end up sounding like the ones used on Madonna's song "Lucky Star"], are thrown in. The lyrics center around a New Age universality sort of theme. The man / woman on the cover is no doubt a singer, and the songs are written in a way that relies solely on the artist's beliefs. Record companies that produce these albums [realizing there's a market], are blind to the actual quality of the songs. You've now unlocked the formula for "world music." Note that most of the people on these albums are extremely talented musicians and singers, but you'll be left feeling that they're given little or no musical freedom to explore their own ideas by their producers. To end the experiment, take the CD's down to your local used record store and sell them. If you're lucky, you'll get 10 cents for each $1 you've spent, and the person behind the counter will grumble under his breath, saying, "Great, how am I going to get rid of these?" (**Mantra / Tinder**) *Sam Rose.*

AUTOMATICS 20 Golden Greats! CD

I love this CD! I can finally listen to *both* of The Automatics' 10"s in my van. Vinyl doesn't work too well in a vehicle, y'know? If you've ever heard The Automatics, you'll know why I'm stoked. These guys rip. They sound like The Ramones on serious amounts of coffee with a tinge of 60's pop. Most of their songs are about chicks and hangin' out. Great hooky, spazzed-out pop punk. This is a must have! (**Mutant Pop**) *Eddie V. Migraine.*

THE BACKSLIDERS Southern Lines CD

The recent disintegration of the original Backsliders lineup is a tragedy that becomes even more evident with the release of these final recordings. Their music is death, love and loss wrapped up in a warm, familiar roots rock / honky-tonk that is aggressively executed and emotionally complicated. It's all here...straight up Bakersfield, some Neil Young cops, a Flamin' Groovies name-check, but uniquely distinguished in every case. **Southern Lines** is a combination of the best qualities from their earlier releases, their exciting (but too brief) live debut, From Raleigh, North Carolina and the uneven full-length, Throwin' Rocks At The Moon. On stage, though, the Backsliders were as real as a band could get, blaring their souls with full intensity even on a Tuesday night in a shitty little small town sports bar. Lead singer and natural star, Chris Robertson has reportedly got a new lineup for the Backsliders and is readying to play these great songs live... This will be a good gamble to take. (**Mammoth**) *Fred Beldin.*

BANTAM ROOSTER The Cross & the Switchblade CD

You might say T. Jackson Potter is a chip off the 'ol block. The last time I saw Tommy he was sporting a tux and bare chest at the Gold Dollar in Detroit! What a prom! The music of Bantam Rooster is uncompromising. You not only have to hear it but you have to see it to believe it. You will not be disappointed! (**CRYPT**) *Ken Knott*

BENEDETI & SVOBODA Flamenco Dreams CD

"Isla Mar" is the opener. Relaxing and soothing, I almost wanted to sleep, but... this is supposed to be very good flamenco music! Well, so far, this is flamenco on Prozac! Ok, maybe with the second song things pick up, but not much. It's good music, but a bit too relaxed for me. These are instrumentals to listen to while studying, making love, etc. Very good! My only beef is they're too restrained. This is a dual guitar duo, couldn't they come up with cool harmonies? I guess I'll have to wait for my new metal band's CD. That's going to have some kick ass dual guitar stuff! [**Domo**] *Gerry Cummings.*

BENT LEG FATIMA Fatima CD

Bent Leg Fatima has a heavy Pink Floyd influence, circa the Syd Barrett psychedelia era. The music has plenty of spacey, intergalactic keyboards, off-key acoustic guitar plunking, splashy cymbals, electronic squeaks and tweaks, organ drone swirl and a vocalist who has listened to a lot of Marc Bolan. The lyrics are pseudo-mystic nonsense. I enjoyed the rubbery bass thud of "Cup & Saucer" the best. [**File 13**] *Allen Salyer.*

BILLYCLUB Out To Lunch CD

Billyclub rocks the old-fashioned, Brit-punk way. Yeah, it's been done before, but you know what? It still sounds good! Songs like "Blitz (get with the new breed)" and "Charm" bleed power. I'd dig seeing these guys with Motorhead (think they toured together last year?) and maybe a Victory band. (**Idol**) *fike*

BITTER FLESH THING s/t CD

BFT is an industrial band fronted by one Zazu Pitts. I had the chance to see Pitts in action, when he filled the lead singer slot for New Math during their April reunion show; he acquitted himself very well. I was looking forward to hearing the BFT album and, I have to say, BFT is a band to watch. They've already gained a following in the western NY state area, and I hope they will be able to step into the national spotlight. This 7-song CD is a well-crafted exploration into Stabbing Westward's territory without the metal influence. That's not to say the album is weak, on the contrary, it's heavy rock that has an edge to it. The songs are personal and introspective, in a way that most people can relate to. Accessible industrial that doesn't suck isn't all that easy to come by, but BFT delivers. Check them out on the web at www.bitterflestthing.com. Recommended if you like NIN or Stabbing Westward. (**Sour Note**) *Eric Reanimator.*

BLACK JACK s/t CD

Hmm... this reminds me of somebody, but I can't put a finger on it. This is heavily Black Flag / early Butthole Surfers-influenced old-school punk with a real strong dose of Motorhead. Not much melody, but they make it work. The CD is relentless, barely any space between songs. The production is sorta lo-fi which adds to the charm. (**Estrus Heavy Machinery**) *Eddie Van Migraine.*

THE BLACK WATER Whores CD

Without a doubt, one of the finest [and most surprising] CDs to land upon my desk. The first song, the title track, "Whores," will stop you cold. I haven't heard music quite as dynamic as this since Cop Shoot Cop's White Noise release. Coincidentally, Cop Shoot Cop is the closest band I can compare The Black Water to. Excellent songwriting, musicianship, lyrics, vox – all the way around. Comes complete with exquisite packaging, not unlike those produced by I.P.R. in AZ. Find this and play it often! **[Drowning Man]** *N. Z.*.

THE BLUE RAGS Eat at Joe's CD

When the Blue Rag's first album, Rag n' Roll came out in 1997, it caught my ear, made me tap my feet unremittingly and kept my soul swingin' for a good long while. Combining elements of ragtime, bluegrass and country swing in a clever way that had never been done in such an intriguing manner, the Blue Rags fabricated a sound that for, all-the-world, sounded like Doc Watson sitting in with Scott Joplin and a backing band! Lest you think the Blue Rags are merely some retro outfit, take heed. They infuse a healthy dose of punk attitude with pop sensibilities, akin to that of Elvis Costello or even the Buzzcocks, into this engaging mix of influences. Anchored solidly by the songwriting and flat-picking guitar of Scott Sharpe, along with the piano playing and singing of Jake Hollifield, the Blue Rags make a follow-up to Rag 'n' Roll with **Eat at Joe's**, released once again on Sub Pop Records. The first thing that grabbed me was that the Blue Rags seemed to have refined their style, relying more on the pop hooks of the songs, rather than using the underlying song as a platform to rip solo after amazing solo. Not that this was a bad tactic on Rag 'n' Roll, although at times it did give the listener a sort of cluttered feel, as though there wasn't enough space for all the required jamming. Yet on **Eat at Joe's**, the Blue Rags have certainly not abandoned their fleet-fingered fret and ivory work. Take a song like "High Down Low," which begins with a mid-tempo New Orleans' blues beat slowly building momentum, until the end result is a rollicking trade-off between Sharpe and Hollifield. Standout tracks include, "Hard Times," which has a relentlessly driving rhythm and slide guitar melody. The musical arrangement on this song is superb -- no one instrument overrides the others, but rather the combination of electric guitar, doghouse bass, piano, acoustic guitar and minimal drums intertwine wonderfully. "Movin' On" which, despite its title, is not a truck driving song, but a completely infectious pop tune, showcasing their ability to write songs that stick in your psyche hours after the disc has finished spinning. Also, take note of the hidden track at the end of song #12, a Blue Rags-type version of "Free Born Man." The Blue Rags are a welcome addition to a variety of newer bands such as: Bad Livers, Squirrel Nut Zippers, Asylum Street Spankers, Hot Club of Cowtown and Split-Lip Rayfield who are nurturing time-honored musical traditions while providing their own unique spin on its rich legacy. Highly recommended. **(Sub Pop)** *D. N.*

BOB THE SINGING BASS PLAYER Waiting for Goddard, Waiting for Goddard... CD

Bob's voice is similar to Iggy Pop, but he sings about social and environmental issues. Unfortunately, while the lyrics are, at times, funny and thought-provoking, the music isn't worthy of comment. There are several times where Bob sounds out of tune or off beat. Maybe I'm just a cynical bastard, but I found myself saying "so what?" to most of the supposedly to be thought-provoking lyrics. Don't waste your time with this. [no label] *Karp*.

THE BOUNCING SOULS Hopeless Romantic CD

"New school" punk / street punk, recommended if you like Cocksparrer or the Swingin' Utters. I've been a fan of these guys for a while, and while their last studio album (there's a live EP I haven't heard yet) was not as good as the amazing Maniacal Laughter, I was looking forward to this release and, I'm glad to say, they don't disappoint. Unlike many bands, the Souls write songs that are emotional but not pretentious. They seem to tell stories about life, mostly about how things / hobbies / life change, but they do it in a way that seems honest and straight-forward. In addition to the mature themes and lyrics, the Souls also write catchy-as-hell tunes. Lest you think they are some crappy emo-band, the Souls also have a sense of humor, a sense of fun and a lot of energy. **(Epitaph)** *E. R.*

THE BOY WONDER JINX Left-handed Smoke Shifter CD

What is it with Chapel Hill? There are about 2000 bands and they all seem to sound identical; except for one band, but it's not this one. This is a keyboard-dominated band that might sound like Ben Folds 5. I'm not sure, nor do I care, because I don't care for Ben's band or this CD. It's hard for me to be unfair and dismiss it. The problem is, when I listen to this CD, nothing comes to mind. I can't sit back, tap my toes and say: "We got a hit!" Although if I were working for some huge magazine, I might say such an untruth, depending on how much payola I got from the label... I'm sorry, what was writing about? **(Slingshot)** *Bryan Ramirez*.

THE BROWNS Greatest Hits, Vol. 1 CD

The more I listen to this Canadian gem, the more I like it. The best way to describe Browns' sound is Razoreater-meets-Chixdiggit or, for the uninitiated, Groovie Ghoulies-meets-Blanks '77s. The CD is filled with high energy pop punk, with horror bent lyrics. Several of the songs sound familiar, but I can't place them exactly. I enjoyed the tongue-in-cheek feel of the music and the sense of fun that makes the CD enjoyable. I do have problems with the CD: First, its length, 16 minutes (4 between the last song and the hidden track) is too short. 2nd, the band has a clear horror influence, but horror music is mainly defined by its lyrics, and the vocals aren't clear enough to pick them up, plus the lyrics aren't printed in the liner notes. My last complaint is the "hidden track." I'm sick of these "wait 5 minutes and you'll get another track" deals. It's unnecessary and, if you have an extra track, I want the title and the lyrics. All that aside, this is one of the better albums I've heard this year. I recommend it highly if you like the Ramones, Groovie Ghoulies and Chixdiggit. **(Meter)** *E. R.*

CALLIOPE [in]organic CD

I felt like a jackass recently, when a reporter from a local Lansing magazine asked me who the best local band in Lansing is and I couldn't think of anyone, non-genre specific / overall. A day or so later, I could've kicked myself when I realized that I'd completely vapor-locked by *not* citing Calliope. I consider them as "nationals" now and that caused me to bypass 'em. Well, I won't make that mistake again. Let me say, here-n-now, Calliope are unequivocally the cream o' the crop here in L-town. That said, let's take a look at their latest, **[in]organic**. The band gives us another highly satisfying platter of their brand of "space music." At the same time, they are maturing more with each release, and this CD is no exception. Musically, lyrically, songwriting, etc., they've taken themselves to a higher level. From the intriguing "did you get what you came for," with its Middle East flavor and instrumentation, to the final strains of "signals," this is the band's best work to date. Truly unique and a wonderful listen, from Lansing's finest. **[Thick]** *N. Zebrowski*.

CAPTAIN SMOOTHIE Nowhere Indiana CD

You remember when you were a kid, and your mother would come to your band or choir concert, school play or whatever, and she'd always smile and say, "That's cute"? Captain Smoothie is cute. **(Phat Elphis)** *Scott Joyner*.

CHAMBER STRINGS Gospel Morning CD

Upon first hearing this, it was hard to place a date on **Gospel Morning**. It wouldn't be a stretch to say this was produced in the 60's, even though it was recorded last year. In that respect, I guess it's timeless. Chamber Strings, singer / songwriter Kevin Junior, formerly of the Mystery Gals and the Rosehips, plays Blues-inspired British Invasion-era rock. Very mod indeed. I'd put this up there with the Verve's best album, you pick which one. **(Bobsled)** *R. Overmyer*.

CHER Greatest Hits CD

This is the best damn CD I've heard in years! It beats Whitney Houston more than Bobby Brown does. **[Geffen]** *Chris Wardell*.

CHICKEN DOG The Other White Meat CD

Chicken Dog tries to combine metal, hardcore and humor. Needless to say, it doesn't work. The kind of lame music you'd expect to come out of Toledo. **[Skin Klub Entertainment]** *Karp*.

CHILDREN OF BODOM Hatebreeder CD

Well, if their name doesn't demean them enough, maybe the mindless thrashing guitars and screaming will. Call me a hypocrite, but violent people need to die. **[Nuclear Blast America]** *T. Henton*.

CIGAR Speed is Relative CD

Pretty typical fast, melodic west coast punk. Good, tight bass [a la Tony Lombardo without sounding like Descendents], but more like a cross between Face to Face and Pennywise. The 14 songs on this debut album are, at times, fascinatingly creative with poppy hooks and the occasional guitar solo. [This is in parentheses because it's here that I'll make note of the hidden song, containing a power instrumental and impressive beat box session]. I'm pretty sure their goal is to have you consume lots of caffeine and participate in some breakneck extreme sports. Suuurrrge! **[Theologian]** *Lizzie Cook*.

CLAN OF XYMOX Creatures CD

11 deliciously dark, yet uncannily uplifting songs. Sincere electro-synthetic-pop / gothic / tales from the darkside combined with music and ever present beat. It's certainly not a less-traveled road, but one in which Clan of Xymox thrive on. Catchy, spooky, spirited and clever. **[Metropolis]** *N. Zebrowski*.

GILBY CLARKE Rubber CD

Since when did Pavement notice blues-rock bands? For years they've concentrated on the heaviest bands that the metal scene had to offer. I don't know, but if you want to hear what Gilby has been up to musically since he left Guns N' Roses, all you've got to do is pick this up. Before that, however, let me give you a run down on some of the songs. "Killroy was Here" seems tailor-made for what used to be "Z-Rock" in its last stages. You know, when they were more "alternative" or "soft-rock" than metal? "The Haunting" is also cool. "Something Wrong About You" starts ominously heavy, before going "pop." Still, it's a good song. Actually, that's the one thing tying all of the songs, is that they're all well-crafted, rock-n-roll blues songs. Gilby sings each song just right. The soloing, too, is excellent. To be honest, I don't know why I wanted to hate this CD, but it's very good! Get it now! **[Pavement Music]** *Gerry Cummings*.

CLAWFINGER s/t CD

Clawfinger is a metal band from Sweden. This isn't a rap-metal band, but the vocal style and sound is halfway to it. I also hear some industrial influences, like the sparingly used vocal effects. Those influences add a bit of a "doom atmosphere" to the record. Don't get the wrong idea however, this is still a metal band. The music sounds pretty good, sharp guitars and pounding bass. No catchy riffs here, just standard metal. The lyrics are fairly interesting, with themes about thinking for yourself, standing up for yourself and not selling out. The song "Crazy" pokes fun at modern bands like Korn and Beck. Overall, I enjoyed the lyrics, but the music didn't do much for me. And why does every foreign band feel the need to sound like Americans? I was hoping to hear Swedish accents. This CD also comes with a CD-ROM program, where you can allegedly mix your own Clawfinger track, but I don't seem to have the right setup for that in my computer. **[The Music Cartel]** *S. Peterson*.

EDDIE "THE CHIEF" CLEARWATER Cool Blues Walk CD

Every time I think that blues is dead (mostly because I think the Chicago-style is so prevalent nothing else gets a chance to breathe anymore) something like this comes along. Clearwater ducked out of the picture for a while, but he's back now. I assume he's got a lot of bills to pay or something, because he's playing his guitar like a man who's angry. In any case, this record has more energy than Hoover's Dam. The originals are terrific (check out "Boppin' at the Top of the Rock") and the cover of "I Just Want To Make Love to You" isn't even as annoying as I expected it to be. This will be a great CD to play while I'm grilling steaks and drinking beer on the front porch. **(Bullseye Blues & Jazz)** *Scott Joyner*.

CLEEN: Second Path CD

Ice cold and antiseptic / The predator hidden in an opaque visage / disguising its intent / until it's upon you / Like a thief in the night / come and gone / another job done / that's what you'll find on the Second Path. Minus the hyperbole: an excellent record... intelligent synth-pop, this CD plays like 80's synth-tunes made with 90's equipment. **[Metropolis]** *N. Zebrowski*.

CLUBBER Same Time Next Week... CS

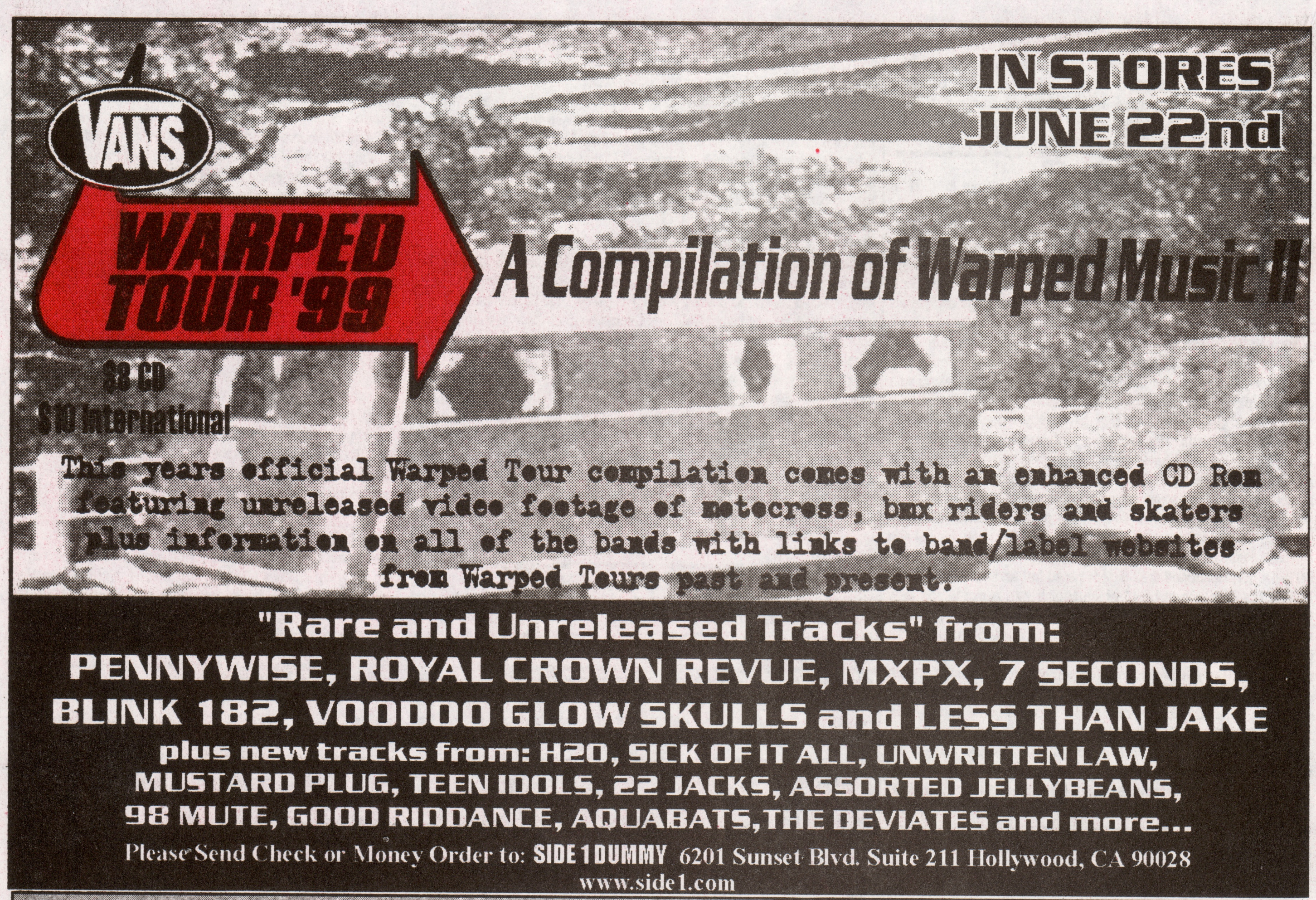
Pretty good rock here. At first, they reminded me of Plankeye, but then switched to a ".38 Special sound" for 1 song and then...ah heck, I dunno. It's uplifting and melodic, with good production as well. I can see this tape growing on me. **[Rock Fight]** *Chad*.

COLLEEN COADIC Scream of Consciousness CD

Scream Of Consciousness is Colleen Coadic's 4th album. She's renowned in Canada, but virtually unknown in the US. Originally from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada, Coadic now calls Alaska home. Fiercely independent, she's boldly taken control of her career by self-producing her 3 Canadian self-releases. Maybe that's why Ani DiFranco chose Coadic to open for her latest tour, a symbiotic lifestyle. The album's opener, "Wonder Years," sounds like an odd mix of Edie Brickell and the Sundays. Coadic sings about her joyous, carefree and rebellious youth. It's a so-so song, but once I got past it, the rest of the album was wonderful. Check out the girls who give the eye to each other in "My Adoring Glance." "*My adoring glance has caught the eye of that girl over there. I've known her all my life it seems. She has appeared in my dreams.*" Funky bass lines dominate and has an "Ani DiFranco feel" both vocally and in construction. The flirt, the gaze, lovers and powerful best friends. "*His offered lips are soft and sweet, but hers are so complete.*" "Hypnotized" has lots of energized, hypnotic guitar which switches to atmospheric Indian-based music with tabla percussion. Her admiration for Sheila Chandra comes through as her vocals waver; struggling vocals that jump out of the speakers, back and forth. "Baraka" is about the give and take of relationships. "*Open up your mind. No need to be unkind,*" says "Saving Grace." But redemption has its price. "*I give you entirely too much. You give me insanity.*" "Bad Dream" has catchy rhythm and funk bass, galloping gumption guitar. It's a study in alternate realities. Trying to get past the merely passable towards real creativity is the gist of "Mediocrity." Coadic speak / sings "Deep In The Pharmacy" as she tries to create a new persona. Feeling small and insignificant in "Ripple," she's a drop of blood in the sea, a ripple on the tide in comparison to others. As you can see, there's a duality in the songs: longing for relationships and relationships that are dysfunctional; having confidence in herself yet wanting to change image; her love for her art yet worried that her art is mediocre. Coadic examines all her self-doubt and tries to get past it to make her self whole. It's music as therapy. **[Badoo Toonz Music]** *Allen Salyer*.

COMMON RIDER Last Wave Rockers CD

Operation Ivy fans are going to buy this, but for everyone else, this is the new project by Jesse Michaels, one of the former frontmen for said band (the other, you should be considerably more familiar with. See: Rancid). This is mostly a mixed bag of Op Ivy-flavored rockers that vary from straightforward punk to offbeat 3rd-wave ska, with the exception of "A Place Where We Can Stay" and "Deep Spring," both of which are reminiscent of Agent Orange's bubblegum sound. The band consists of 90's punk veterans: Mass and Dan [Squirtgun / Screeching Weasel] and Heather [Teen Idols] on the duets. This is a well-produced, if not slightly schizophrenic album, that keeps an edginess and a sense of urgency throughout the entire eclectic set



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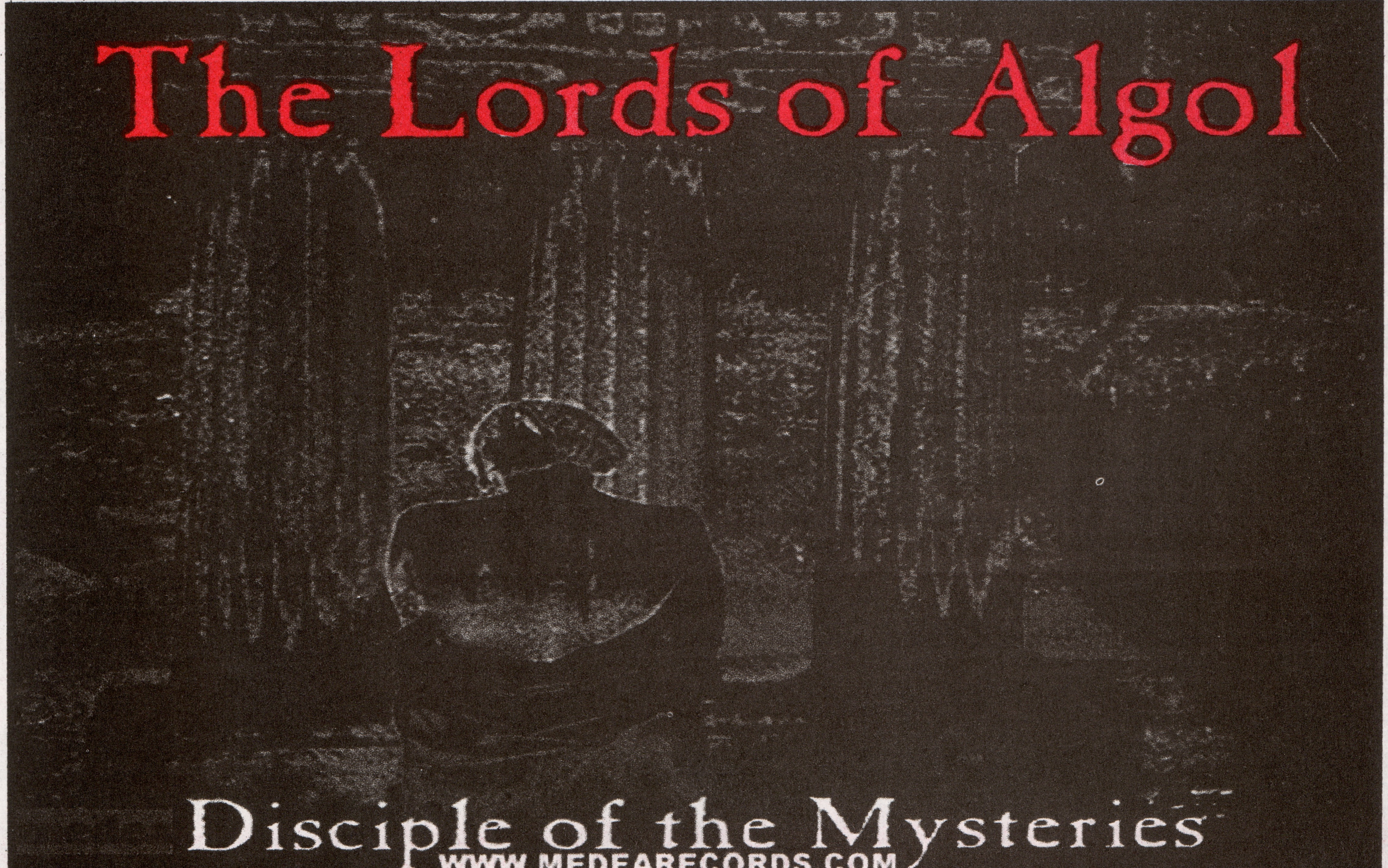

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that most punk bands fail to deliver on a single EP. [**Panic Button**] *E. Emmitt.*

THE COST s/t CD

In the pleasantly surprised department, comes The Cost, who even though they come across as a lame Goth / metal band with their medieval artwork on the cover, is anything but. Rather, what we have here is a little combination of Filth, Grimple (only a little), Strychnine, Econochrist and an added style of bleak crust punk. Further proof that you can't judge a record by its cover. (**New Disorder / Bad Monkey**) *Demangis.*

THE CROWN ROYALS **Funky-Do!** CD

The quote on the back of this CD reads "Really Good Grooves!" I couldn't have said it better. This is, without a doubt, one of the finest jazz albums I've heard this year. The obvious standout is Ken Vandermark, who sounds like he's blowing fire through his sax. There's nothing overly fancy or pretentious in his playing, just rich, raw tones played impeccably. I was so blown away by his playing at first, I barely noticed the other instruments playing. Don't be fooled though, if it weren't for the equal skill of the rest of the group, this album wouldn't be nearly as seamless. I honestly can't find a single fault with this album. The music is 70's-style funk / jazz played to perfection. Without odd tempo changes or innovative harmonizing, the Crown Royals aren't out to win any technical jazz trophies, they're out to play good music really well. I heartily recommend this to everyone. [**Estrus**] *Karp.*

DARLING **The Night in Bloom** CD

Darlin', this has been done before. **The Night in Bloom** is extremely moody, low-fi and moreover, cliché. I can't get past the male lyricist's out-of-tune vocals that fail to have any endearing quality. Also, the lyrics stop short of saying anything truly meaningful. The music is at times heavily piano driven with intermittent bass, light guitars and drums played with brushes. Reminds me of Ben Folds 5 or the slew of bands that sound exactly like Ben Folds 5. There's a song titled, "Art School." I mean, how pretentious can you get?! (**Guilt Ridden Pop**) *R. Overmyer.*

DEAD BUGS **The Night We Got Sick and Died** 7"

This 7" is awesome, featuring great production and impressive songs. These guys are veterans of the St. Louis, MO. scene. The songs have a sort-of Dickies-meets-Groovie Ghoulies sound. You gotta like that! The music's hooky, mid tempo, old-school pop punk. There's definitely some Ramones buried in there, too. *E.V.M.*

THE DEADITES **Better Luck Next Time** CD

This is a neat mixture of cow-punk music and horror punk lyrics. The playing is fun and has the right amount of energy, while the vocals are clear and the lyrics are better than average. This'd be a good gift for that Johnny Cash / Misfits fan in your life. The better songs include, "13th Floor," "Night of the Demons," "Death Come to My Bed" and "Why am I Always the One." There's also a cow-punk cover of "Folsom Prison Blues." Recommended if you like Hayride To Hell and Social Distortion [**Craptacular**] *Eric Reanimator.*

DEAD LIGHT s/t CS

Since I'm a musician, I can tell good songwriting and musicianship, no matter what type of music it is. When I review types of music that I normally wouldn't listen to, I try to be fair in my judgement and often think, "Someone might like this, especially if they're into this band or that." Well, nobody in their right mind would possibly like this. It's generic rock and, while I listened to it, I pictured the band standing on stage, stiff-legged and afraid to move. It's horrible. The best thing about this? There are only 2 songs on it -- whew! *Chad.*

THE DELGADOS **Peloton** CD

At first, one might think of Glasgow's Delgados as indie-rock shoegazers, a few years too late onto the scene. Far from the truth, however. This quartet shows vision, invention and genius on **Peloton**. There are traces of My Bloody Valentine and Spirea X here, but those are simply "leaping-off points." The Delgados' music is far more personal and touching, devoid of the nonsensical studio noise associated with the early 90's Britpop of Ride and that ilk. "Everything Goes Around the Water" is an inspired pop song, featuring a duet from singers Emma Pollack and Alun Woodward; their voices shimmying in between chirpy flute notes and an eerie piano arrangement. "The Arcane Model" has great pop elements, while "Blackpool" features an excellent scratching-sampling interlude midway through. The band pays homage to white noise sound with a distinctive Curve-like sense of urgency in Pollack's cold-steel voice. This is a tremendous effort. The Delgados' greatest achievement on **Peloton**, however, is their willingness to challenge the listener over and over again. This isn't an "easy" album to listen to. At times, the 11 songs seem as uncomfortable to sing as they are to listen to, but it works. It's a refreshing pleasure. (**Beggars Banquet**) *B. Toole.*

THE DELUSIONS **I Hope It Dies On A Sunny Day** CD

The Delusions are a power / grunge quartet from...Seattle. Nevertheless, this record is better than you'd think. In fact, the 13 songs contain very little of "the sound" one associates with the Pacific Northwest since "those guys" became a duo after a memorable firearms mishap. Actually, the sound on **I Hope It Dies On A Sunny Day** owes more to the power rock of the 70's than it does to anything contemporary. There's a lot of electricity here, it's the perfect album for a late-night beer-swilling party. The message from Dave Keppel and Jim Roth (singer and guitarist, respectively) seems to be that they like to have fun. (**My Own Planet**) *Bob Toole.*

JEAN DEROME **Torticolis** CD [live]

Jean Derome, 1/6th of the band performing on **Torticolis**, is primarily a saxophone player who dabbles on flute. This is by no means a "free jazz" outfit. What they accomplish on **Torticolis** is more akin to the noodling you might find on one of Frank Zappa's You Can't Do That On Stage performances. Previously outlined chord generations have been defined, with great leeway allowed for improvisational events. However, there's less squawking and more of a communicative passing-off of solo variations on the main theme. Given that, no one has center stage, as evidenced on the 5th track (I'll spare the lengthy French title), when lead guitarist Rene Lussier begins the journey and drummer Pierre Tanguay changes tempos midway through. A solo turns into 2 simultaneous solos and, eventually, the horns kick back in with the lead theme. It's not uncommon for the entire band to solo at once, eventually melding back into what they started with. It'd be easy to cite Zorn as a contemporary, but there's no trace of the klesmer-ish jazz you might find with Masada. Instead, the themes are more along the lines of Zappa's attempts at complicated song structures. This isn't a bad thing, in fact, this band blazes with the intensity and emotion that seems to be missing from most of Zappa's "forced" compositions. There are disappointments on **Torticolis**; the main being missing the live performance of the recording. [**Ambiances Magnetiques**] *Davis Ford.*

DESPISE YOU **West Side Horizons** CD

It's about time Despise You put out a compilation CD of all their scattered releases. Recorded and released between '94-96, **West Side Horizon** documents 62 songs of grind-thrash that these guys were known for. Always angry, political and even pay a tribute to all the early cross over bands like Suicidal Tendencies and D.R.I. Not bad for a band that's only played out a couple times. (**Pessisimer**) *Demangis.*

DIEFORMS **Histories** CD

The first thing you're confronted by is the artwork. A beautifully constructed photograph of some seal-like thing and a ball python. Dieforms has been making music for a long time, since 1980 or so, at the frontier of German Industrial with bands like Kraftwerk and KMFDM. **Histories** is a 2-CD, 33-track, retrospective of what Dieforms feel is their best music from 1980 to 1998. If you're a fan of industrial music or just a fan of the "roots" of industrial music, I recommend buying this. If you have no idea of what I mean, buy it anyway. Like I said, phat beats, phat label, phat band. [**Metropolis**] *Tom Henton.*

DIMMU BORGIR **Spiritual Black Dimensions** CD

I've heard of Dimmu Borgir for quite a few years, but never got to listen to them. With the release of **Spiritual...**, I've begun to read good reviews for it, so it came as a surprise when I got this in the mail from my editor / publisher. And let me tell you, a DB experience is something to behold. From the first seconds of "Reptile" I can see that DB uses fast drumbeats, lush piano stuff, heavy guitars parts, and vocals that go from death to actual singing! "Behind the Curtains of Night Phantasmagoria" uses faster drumbeats and an eerie use of piano chords. The song moves along, and then it explodes into faster stuff! "Dreamside Dominions" makes me think that this could have been a single if it had been released. I can even see it on MTV (if MTV was still cool [*was it ever?*, ed.]). This song rips! I could hear guitar harmonies [which I love]! "United in Unhallowed Grace" is a good song, but I liked the previous ones better. "The Promised Future Aeons" has a lot of promise. It starts with lots of keyboards. I could even hear a choir [I bet that's a keyboard "choir" and not a real one]. It's a bit slow at the beginning, that's because it's building up to be a song worthy of a horror soundtrack. Maybe I could use it on the movie I'm writing. Are you listening DB? "The Blazing Monoliths of Defiance" is also good, but reminds me of Morbid Angel. "The Insight and the Catharsis" is another piano-heavy ditty. "Grotesquery Concealed" starts with great piano, then a scream! It's a good riff! Finally, "Arcane Lifeforce Mysteria" starts with an acoustic guitar part that leads into heavy guitar and drums stuff. Very moody and evil sounding. This has to be one of heaviest records in '99. DB is definitely on the right path, leading heavy music into the 21st century. Dimmu! Dimmu! Dimmu! [**Nuclear Blast**] *G. Cummings.*

THE DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND **Buck Jump** CD

A triumphant return of funk and soul finds the Dirty Dozen at it again. **Buck Jump** is full of toe-tappin' ditties that'll even make your grandma tip her rocker. The bluesy "Unclean Waters" starts it off followed by the cult hit "Run Joe." The Dirty Dozen's signature smooth brass sounds reverberate throughout this 9-track release. Their uniqueness comes from the big band sound from the abundance of instruments that are successfully combined. Not many can do it but The Dirty Dozen have it mastered. [**Mammoth**] *M. M.*

DYNAMIC RIBBON DEVICE **Crackertax** CD EP

DRD's 5-song CD [Spectra Sonic Proportions], is full of ecstatic energy. DRD, a quartet from K-zoo, is a musical breath of fresh air, from a town which has had its share of generic ska, funk and metal bands. DRD's sound is original, but seems to be influenced by (or are comparable to) Quixote; they're also similar to Harriet the Spy. Jeff and Brandon [drums / bass], make up the offbeat rhythm section, while guitarists Chafe and Zack strike unusual chords, which are thrown into the mix. Singing and screaming are done simultaneously at times, like on "Steve Albini's Panties", chanting "*She likes it, she needs it.*" The cover is also unique; a foreign stamp screen-printed onto a canvas-like sleeve which the CD slips into. If you know what's best for you, pick up **Crackertax**. You'll never get their anthem ("Hey, Hey, Hey, Trying To Get Away") out of your head. (**Little Man**) *Shawn Wernette.*

STEVE EARLE & THE DEL McCOURY BAND **The Mountain** CD

Following on the heels of the bluegrass song "I Still Carry You Around," placed boldly (and somewhat conspicuously) in the middle of Earle's last album, El Corazon, Earle and the Del McCoury Band have linked up for an entire album's worth of material. The result is nothing short of tremendous, as Earle adds a wonderfully gritty element to bluegrass music. Whereas the first half of Earle's career (pre-prison) was that of a country songwriter, slowly giving in to rock temptations; the 2nd half has been the direct opposite, with Steve walking more and more down the "Hillbilly Highway", increasingly exploring bluegrass and other acoustic traditions. It's a welcome journey for both fans of Earle and bluegrass alike. Sometimes musicians awkwardly step outside of their strengths for the sake of creativity, but this clearly isn't the case with **The Mountain**. Employing the Del McCoury Band, undeniably one of the finest bluegrass bands presently recording and touring is a good start, but **The Mountain** goes several steps further. Earle's ability to write a good bluegrass number is quite amazing -- rarely does one find a recent bluegrass album consisting of entirely new and original material, yet **The Mountain** contains 14 songs, all written by Earle. These range from traditional-sounding numbers -- you'll swear you've heard "Carrie Brown" before -- to new twists, such as the Celtic-flavored "Dixieland." Also notable is Earle's ability as a guitarist, since he seems to have evolved into a proficient bluegrass rhythm player in a relatively short time. Longtime bluegrass fans might find Earle's voice to be a bit too rough and tumble for the music, and while he certainly cannot hit the notes like Del McCoury, he does bring a rough-hewn tenor to the music that isn't instantly engaging, yet ultimately satisfying. Folks, this album is monumental. Should **The Mountain** get the same attention as El Corazon, expect to see and hear bluegrass in numerous places where it's been sorely missed. This album will hopefully bring attention to The Del McCoury Band, who've gone criminally unrecognized for years. Whether you're a fan of Steve Earle, bluegrass music or fast-paced instrumentation, this album will fit nicely into your collection. (**E-Squared**) *D. Neal.*

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN **How to Make a Monster** CD

These zanesters take their Frankenstein and their rock seriously. Fronted by Steve Miller (no, not the same one you ninnies are thinking of) and how did I end up with this one, anyway? Thanks, Norm! At least he doesn't LOOK like "THE" SFM. All jokes aside, this CD is nothing but pure ROCK. I suggest you guys get it to impress the chicks. (**Victory**) *Ken Knott.*

ELECTRIC WIZARD **Love My Fanatics / Electric Wizard** 2-CD

Talk about indulging... Electric Wizard takes it to the extreme both within and outside of their music. I have to tell you that these guys are great. Nice heavy doses of space rock; abusing drugs [no hippie "expand your mind" crap here, they say] and abusing old musical instruments [circa '70s]. Electric Wizard takes what Black Sabbath started and Monster Magnet lost to a new threshold of heavy sonic excess. Love My Fanatics is a re-release from '97, which includes new artwork [courtesy of the singer] and a bonus CD of previously unreleased mix of Electric Wizard. The original release of Electric Wizard sold-out almost immediately and was dubbed "The heaviest stoner doom [rock] known to man." The band also has a new album due out in '99, tentatively titled Dope Throne. The album will be about, what else?, but Armageddon and the Apocalypse. [**The Music Cartel**] *Tom Henton.*

EMBODIMENT **Embrace the Eternal** CD

This is some of the heaviest music I've listened to lately. What irks me, at times, is the use of guitar sounds that are too similar to Sepultura's. It's still killer though. "Breed" is incredibly heavy and the guitars sound immense. "Swine" reminds me of Morbid Angel a little, but then the song gets a bit faster and complicated. I love the double bass drumming! And the voice throughout the record is deadly! I wish there were more than 9 songs on the album. [**Tooth & Nail**] *G. C.*

ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO **Bourbonitis Blues** CD

Cementing his position as one of this country's top songwriters, Mr. Escovedo returns with an extremely emotional, musically superb, and ultimately wonderful release. Songs range from humorous rave-ups to heartbreaking, emotion-drenched ballads; each song another testament to Escovedo's impressive musical acumen. Nothing glossy, flowery, just songs that tell it like it is. This is, without a doubt, THE BEST RECORD IN THIS ISSUE. **[Bloodshot]** *N. Zebrowski.*

FACTORY 81 Mankind CD

Detroit's best new label, Medea Recs scores, yet again, with this over-the-top release. The music's a combination of heavy metal and guitar driven industrial, with grooves and some rap thrown in for good measure. This CD is as brutal as anything we've gotten since **ETCH** began. Normally, I'm not a fan of this style of music, but Factory 81 grabs you by the scruff of your neck, shakes the hell outta you and doesn't let go until the CD's over. Unfortunately, none of the song titles were sent [we got a plain paper sleeve with no info], so going from song to song describing the tunes is a wee bit difficult. Play this loud and long for best results. **[Medea]** *N. Zebrowski.*

FARSIDE The Monroe Doctrine CD

After a 4-year hiatus since their last release, Farside has come back with a new full-length. Evolution has progressed them from their usual punk / hardcore sound into a varied mixture of punk, indie and pop. Farthest from the vein of anything else on this album would be the grindcore song "Save it for the Children," covering topics of death, innocence lost and the planet's final destruction, as any good grindcore should. Bittersweet emo ballads prevail **The Monroe Doctrine** on more than one occasion, really exposing their vulnerable broken and wanting hearts. Overall, there's something on the menu for everyone while still maintaining the distinct Farside sound that has earned them their respect throughout the band's history. **(Revelation)** *Lizzie Cook.*

FASTBREAK Whenever You're Ready CD

This is Fastbreak's third release for Revelation [and second full-length]. The first band that came to mind when I listened to it was Gorilla Biscuits. That was disappointing at first; because it was as if there was disregard for personality. However, after a few listens, the full appreciation for this band will set in. That is, if you don't already like them. Although the vocals don't seem to go anywhere, the lyrics make up for them. Not that every band should have a catchy hook in every song they write, but there should be some sort of flow. Add in their blend of grinding, hard-core guitar riffs and fast, well-metered drums, and the vocals have more of a purpose. There isn't a slow moment on the entire album. This could be bad, if the band is trying to gain creativity points, because the emotion remains constant throughout. Not a bad album by the boys from Boston, but I'd like to see them simmer a bit, to see if they develop. It'd be interesting to see these guys live. Hell, with the amount of energy these guys put into their recording, I have no doubt that they rock pretty hard live. **[Revelation]** *Danny Vendetta.*

THE FIBS Pisces in Crises CD

Despite bluesy undertones and a couple of songs situated squarely in the ska genre, The Fibs' rootsiness has taken on a decidedly country-esque flavor. Which, I'm happy to say, proves well-suited to their intricate guitar picking and appealingly raspy vocals. As always, these jolly fellows want to tickle your funny bone as you tap your feet and, to that end, satirize gun culture on "Bullets 'N' Beer" and do a pretty mean Dylan impression on "I'm Not Bothered Easily" (not in the same comedic league as the simulated Zimmerman cameo on Zappa's Sheik Yerbouti, but amusing enough). You've also got titles like "Jamaica Mistake," "A Penny Earned is a Penny Spent" and, of course, "Pisces in Crises." You get the idea: nothing to slap your knee over, but sufficiently jovial to set a light-hearted tone. **(Watchmen)** *Doug Hamilton.*

FIFTEEN Lucky CD

After a million line-up changes, several labels and a couple of break-ups, Jeff Ott (singer / guitarist) and company return with yet another Fifteen album on Sub-City Records. The fight-for-your-rights-politics are as strong as ever, the epic long pop-punk songs are still present; but a couple things make "Lucky" stand out from their previous records. For starters, this album is named after their ex-bassist, who tragically took his own life a couple years prior to this release. Second of all, proceeds of this record are being donated to The Redwood Summer Justice Project. A very worthy cause and a very heart felt dedication, Fifteen still fight the good fight against the man and his evil corporate ways. (Sub City) *Demangis.*

FIRST GRADE CRUSH It's Not You It's Me CD

Why does every Midwest ska punk band try to set themselves apart by diversifying to the point where it isn't ska anymore? The 4th song was great, until losing its NY Citizens' feel. The 5th song was as good. The rest? Boring, guitar-driven, Midwest ska-punk with a theremin. **[Jump Up!]** *E. Emmitt.*

FISH Raingods With Zippos CD
SIMON PHILLIPS Another Lifetime CD
TEMPEST The 10th Anniversary Comp CD
V/A Frog Pest Tree CD

These are some of today's modern Prog Rock artists. The 4 CDs were sent for me to decipher and possibly link to their ancestors from the early 70's. Some of the artists are from that era and I guess they "blew minds." It's come along way, through changes, and the only true way to experience this is through the ancient ritual...packin' the bowl. The first CD was the compilation, I was only able to listen to the first 5 songs, 'cause it had a nifty little crack right down the middle. We heard Bozzio Levin Stevens, Shadow Gallery, Explorers Club, Cairo and Attention Deficit. Levin's deal had a crafty, weird edge, but the rest of the tunes didn't make it past 30 or 40 seconds, before catcalls came from my partner to: "Turn it off!" and "Aw jeez, will you turn that off!" and "That's it, turn it off!" It didn't pass the test. Simon Phillips had something to do with Toto. He's capable of soundtrack-type forest music that I wouldn't know who to recommend it to. Anyway, go into any guitar shop and find the guy that knows every technique about guitars; y'know, arpeggios, diminished this, 7th-flats. I don't know any of this stuff and I've been playing for over 20 years. I've finally learned what it is that I'm playing. These guys know everything, but creatively... that's another story. It's crafted to show off and look professional. Look at Tempest, crafty modern Irish jig stuff that's not too far off from Jethro Tull. Modernizing traditional music has always driven me over the edge. Do you need distortion or a rock beat? I guess you do, otherwise you wouldn't have this 10th anniversary CD out. As soon as people find this, after their *Riverdance* blow out, it'll be the next big thing. Of course, leave room for Fish, the former Marillion singer is still a freak. Awful title for a CD but the listenability stretches itself and is more compelling than the craft itself. Fish's CD is diverse and sounds like he answers to no one in his world. Interesting, the better stuff comes from those who try not to prove a point. Fish tackles a lot of the more melodic acoustic stuff, and then strays over to the progressive stuff, through some faith he has left in it. He still has fans, they'll love this. **[Magna Carta] [Roadrunner]** *Bryan Ramirez.*

FIVE HORSE JOHNSON Fat Black Pussycat CD

Smoky, dirty, drunk, sprawled all over the floor eating Fritos rock-n-roll the way it's meant to be. Eric Oblander and his Five Horse Johnson have come a long way in a seemingly short period of time and their new CD for the nifty Detroit label Small Stone Recs is a solid winner from front to back. Featuring the usual Mark Dancey acid-tinged artwork, **Fat Black Pussycat** is the perfect accompaniment for your next big greasy barbecue. Check "Fly Back Home," with its low-down guitar licks and Eric's raspy self-assured vocals, and see if that don't put more dip in your hip. Hey fellas, when are you coming back to Lansing for another beer and whiskey session? **[Small Stone]** *D. Wood.*

THE FLATIRONS Prayerbones CD

Hailing from Portland, OR, The Flatirons play distinct "Northern Midwest music," honed by the cold winds and dustbowl-era imagery of 50 years ago. **Prayerbones** is as hard as granite, as dark as a November night and as dangerous as a workman on a 2-day drunk with a pistol and a chip on his shoulder. The formula for these songs, rooted in a small-town America that's long since past, follows closely the one forged by the Cowboy Junkies. You get the uncanny feeling that The Flatirons are close to the Badlands; they're direct descendants of it, to be more precise. "Heaven Help You" chugs along wrought-iron bustling guitar strings like a great cloudburst, an omen of what's to come. Jason Okamoto's and Scott Weddle's guitars hunch over Wendy Pate's gun-barrel voice with fiercely sinister presence. The haunting "Wildfire" is a ball-breaking chain gang campfire song soaked in bad religion, acrimonious intentions, one-eyed jacks and burning whiskey. The band slows the tempo on "So Lonesome" and "Bad Seeds", which slinks along, Dylan-style, highlighted by Pate's bitter spit-through-the-teeth vocal. The breadth of The Flatirons' range of musical styles is best exemplified on "High Lonesome Moon", a jaunty, lilting C&W standard that skips along like a rock across the surface of a pond. They never miss a chance to show their influences: "Nothing" conjures up the ghost of Hank Williams Sr., while tipping a hat to Lucinda Williams and Johnny Cash. The sweetly beautiful and melancholic "Hearts of Fire" is Patsy Cline at her most despairing best. **Prayerbones** is a beautiful, sorrow-drenched dip into the waters of a past that only the best country artists are familiar with, and the dire honesty permeating these songs is rare, yet much welcomed. It's an album to be celebrated, and The Flatirons, a band to be welcomed enthusiastically from this refreshing blend of true country and folk-blues. One need look no further than their raucous, revival tent version of Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train" to find the proof. **(Checkered Past)** *Bob Toole.*

FLOTSAM & JETSAM Unnatural Selection CD

This would've gotten a better review had I not known how good Flotsam & Jetsam can be. Totally lost in the desert with no hope of finding a way out. Better luck next time. **[Metal Blade]** *David Lee.*

THE FOLLOW s/t CD EP

The CD says "Songs from the album Nowaitingplease." First, you guys aren't actually gonna release an honest-to-goodness vinyl record are you? I bet it's gonna be a CD. 4 songs that, on my initial listen, I admired for the 80's sound... Yeah, the '80s. Like that of early U2, before they found irony. And, of course, this CD dabbles into normal, modern grounds, like song 2: I hate it. Luckily, songs 3 and 4 have something going on. It's college sounding all the way. You lose a lot of your "unique edge" when your band has to get with the flow of things. Let me be frank, guys: get risky. "Blue" has something, it's easy listening and that's all right, not a lot of bands are doing that in your genre. It's also okay to get weird in the studio. Maybe gravity bongs or some mescaline to clear it all up. Studios are unlimited, so go for broke and good luck. *Bryan Ramirez.*

THE FREESTYLERS We Rock Hard CD

If you don't check out this CD, at least make a point to see these guys live. The Freestylers tour with a 12-piece traditional band, 2 MC's, DJ Jay-Rock and a crew of break-dancers. Yes, the original b-boy style. **We Rock Hard** is a synthed-out electro release, with spurts of dance-hall, hip hop and whatever else you could think of mixed in. To feel the music you might have to be on a dance floor doing the robot, but it's worth checking out. **(Mammoth)** *M. Milonas.*

THE FREIGHT HOPPERS Waiting on the Gravy Train CD

Easily the best thing I've had to review this month. The Freight Hoppers take a bunch of traditional folk (using the broadest possible definition of the word) songs and bring them to life. The arrangements are original (using standard folk instruments) without seeming to be experiment for its own sake. It seems they loved these tunes, and looked for new ways to play them without altering them beyond recognition. The best thing that I can say about this disc is that it would make a great alternative soundtrack to *Cool Hand Luke*. Know what I'm saying? **(Rounder)** *Scott Joyner*

FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY Implode CD

Call me an old-timer, but why are you kids so darn angry? Why does everything have to be so bleak? The music on this CD is amazing, not to mention the production, and it's also very danceable. The lyrics, however, read like bad poetry from a *Dungeons & Dragons* 8th level wizard / geek in Mrs. Johnson's 9th-grade English class. Life's too short to be so grouchy. Has anybody seen my 12-sided die? **[Metropolis]** *N. Zebrowski. (next time you're buying Batman comics, check with your pals at the comic store – kk)*

THE FULLERENES ...Talk Seriously About Love CD

Full of poppy, garage, doo-wop guitar jangle and harmonic vocals. This CD packs 14 songs into 44 minutes, and every song is a gem. From the opener, "Diane," a nervy ramble about girl anxiety, to the 50's prom-night blue moon melancholy of "Grace," it's obvious this trio has something good to offer. Songs like "Don't Know Why" and "Gentleman," show they've got a sense of humor too. Long ago, I read a line in *Rolling Stone* magazine that was the epitome of cheesiness, but it stuck in my head. "Celebration of music" are the words that jump to mind, while listening to **...Talk Seriously About Love**, "celebration of music." There, I said it. The Fullerenes lay down music that most young bands think they do, but don't: Well-written and performed music, with heartfelt lyrics and harmonies that are catchy and creative, but nowhere near annoying. The fact that their music is good and their lyrics are honest, tell me they probably don't realize how good they are, but you should. **(Stackable)** *fike.*

GAMEFACE Every Last Time CD

Listening to this well-crafted disc, you'd never guess these gents are from the earthquake state. **Every Last Time** is a throwback to the glory days of Midwest indie rock. With all the anthemic harmony of the Goo Goo Dolls circa 1988-92, and the "pedal to the floor" approach of the Replacements of an earlier era; these guys flat out rock! How often do you get a chance to set your hands on a straight up, unpolished rock-n-roll disc? Well, this is one of those occasions. The songs deal with lost love, personal betrayal, growing up, all that good stuff. "Mean" wraps it all up pretty well, coming off more like SoCal pop-punk, still keeping the harmony and melody intact. We all know the world is wrong, Gameface puts it to music beautifully. **[Revelation]** *fike.*

THE GAMITS This is My Boomstick CD

These guys play pop-punk that's so generic, that even after playing it 3 times, I still can't tell you any of the song titles. I'm not impressed and can't recommend it. If you want more pop-punk, get the new Groovie Ghoulies CD instead. **(To the Left)** *E. Reanimator.*

GAS Konigsforst CD

Vaporous condensation slowly pulsing out of the speakers – stretched out Wagnerian symphonic samples panning from left and right – subtle crackling of vinyl – and a deep, subdued bass resonating its tone rhythmically throughout. That's the formula Gas uses. On this, their 3rd full-length, it works again. Eerie and beautiful, subtle but powerful; **Konigsforst** offers little to the formula other than melodic, sampled guitar tones. Wolfgang Voigt (Gas) has an incredibly peculiar sense of timing. There does seem to be a method to his madness. He'll take a droning string sample and create a song out of a few chord changes, accentuated by the sampled guitar previously mentioned; all the while running at a moderate 200bpm. In the middle of the second track (all are untitled), he repeats what might be considered a "prelude" to the chorus, over and over again... anticipating the return to major-chord harmony. It holds out for 1 or 2 minutes, until it finally returns on a beat shifted up from the previous rhythm. None of this is heard directly, because Gas is subconscious music, existing in the back of the mind. Paying attention only serves to discover these strange timing sequences. It's much nicer letting your head do it on its own schedule without forcing it. Good night. **[Mille Plateaux]** *Davis Ford.*

THE GAZA STRIPPERS Laced Candy CD

It's impossible for me to ignore the legacy of Rick Simms, headman of the Gaza Strippers. His first public rock forays were in the legendary Didjits, whose East Lansing appearance at an Ed's Lounge house party 10 years back, still ranks as one of the most exhilarating punk rock moments I've ever experienced. Their trilogy of great records (Hey Judester, Hornet Piñata, Full Nelson Riley) are among the few bright spots in an otherwise leaden grunge-era underground rock scene; these are essential punk rock titles that any loud / fast / fan should own. Unfortunately, revisiting these classic documents shines the light on **Laced Candy**'s deficiencies. Simms' distinctive voice and guitar styling are in a slicker, duller setting here, not yet up to the high standards he's set for himself. I'm sure the Gaza Strippers could tear you a new hole on stage, though... they're tight and fast and on the right road. I hate to count Simms out, he's bound to have another "Max Wedge" or "Who's Ready To Get High" in him, right? **[Man's Ruin]** *Fred Beldin.*

THE GO-BETWEENS The Lost Album '78-'79 CD

I'll admit it, I don't know a lot about The Go-Betweens, so this re-release of their early material didn't have the desired effect on me. It's clear from the first listen, however, that many 80's / 90's bands were inspired by this sparse, stripped-down unconventional sound. This album is a collection of the band's first recordings, including their first two singles, "Lee Remick / Karen" and "People Stay" / "Don't Let Him Come Back." Clearly, this peek into the developmental stage of The Go-Betweens shows where Sebadoh, Red Star Belgrade, etc., got their influences from. This isn't "elegant," but rather the bare bones of 2 people (Robert Forester and Grant McLennan) with fresh ideas, a new idea for the direction of post-punk music and an uncanny sense for the humor in melancholy. Not a masterpiece, but a workable look at the beginnings of a band that should've gotten more recognition. **(Jetset)** *Bob Toole.*

GORDON Fortified Grapes... CS single

This psychedelic dance pop comes off rather nostalgic. Not so much for the '60s, but for the late-80's Manchester scene, celebrating the hallucinogenic experience with sheer hedonistic abandon rather than mystical introspection. Both songs are as cunningly catchy and poly-rhythmically danceable as the Stone Roses were in their heyday, while the atmosphere is actually a little more genuinely trippy. Not in a dark "I Am the Walrus" sort of way, of course -- just good, clean acid-damaged fun. **(Fifty Seven)** *Doug Hamilton.*

GRANDADDY Under the Western Freeway CD

Yuck! This starts with a droning keyboard and a slightly out-of-tune singer, apparently trying to do his best Neil Young impression. No disrespect to Mr. Young, but this is extremely hard to sit through. Hey! There goes my dog, Buster, into the next room. He doesn't like it, either. Lots o' 70's keyboards and overly distorted guitars, backed by lethargic, droning vocals, make up this CD. As I get older, I only like rock-n-roll! Overly artsy-fartsy crap doesn't do it for me, and this is a classic example of overly artsy-fartsy crap. On closer inspection, I discovered that this is distributed by BMG, but I'm the last to say, "*Everything on a major labels sucks*!" However, this CD will become, unquestionably, ammunition for those who think that way. **(Will)** *Eddie Van Migraine.*

GREEN MACHINE The Earth Beater CD

Sludgy Sabbath-like riffs with grindcore vocals. The songs move and groove, but the vocals are meaningless -- I can't understand any of the lyrics at all. If you're into recycling "Supernaught" riffs, or want Kyuss to recruit a grindcore vocalist, this should be right up your alley. If not, don't bother. Recommended if you like metal or grind core. **(Man's Ruin)** *Eric Reanimator.*

GROOP DOGDRILL Half Nelson CD

I don't particularly like being lectured about rock-n-roll by a group of English pricks who think they know more about American culture than somebody who has had as much experience with greasy burgers and girls with chlamydia than I. Now here comes Groop Dogdrill to shut my arrogant Yankee mouth [if only for a minute]. I mean we do rule the world, but most of us can still recognize a good-one-when-we-sees-one and this is a good one for sure. In Europe there's a phenomenon, where young guys dress up like "50's rockers" and tattoo themselves with the Confederate flag and other such nostalgia. They're known as "rockabillies." From what I gather, they listen to 50's-inspired rock music [mixed with a bit of English punk], drinking, fighting and putting as much petroleum as possible in their hair. If you're going to have a movement among today's youth, I guess this'll do. Maybe we can get rid of the baggy pants trend that's infested these shores. In any case, Groop Dogdrill plays exactly the kind of music these youngin's like, though the band doesn't identify themselves with the rockabillies or any other group. It's this independence, in the face of acceptance, that gives Groop Dogdrill's record its theme: loud and furiously played rock-n-roll that's heavy on sentiment. I'm not sure which sentiment, but whatever it is, it's abundant. It's one of those things designed to be deduced by each individual listener. I don't think they set out to be truly original, just good, and they've succeeded. "*Somebody buy that man a sense of humor*" is the line that says it all here. This could be the wave of the future or just another great rock-n-roll record, you decide. There I go, getting put in my place again! **[Beggars Banquet]** *David Lee.*

THE GROOVIE GHOULIES Fun in the Dark CD

This is a near perfect piece of stripped-down good old-fashioned punk rock, aptly titled because it's nothing but fun, fun, fun. From CA, the Ghoulies are a cross between the Misfits and the Ramones with catchy lyrics and buzzsaw chugga-chugga guitar riffs. Keeping it simple is no crime and often leads to a highly concentrated heady brew. That's what you get here. Vampire girls, dyed black hair, mirrors painted black, yeah baby! Come on down and dip your tootsies in the lake of fire. **[Lookout!]** *D. Wood.*

THE GUN & DOLL SHOW Working on the Bomb CD

It's always encouraging to find a band that doesn't have to rationalize that form *is* content (which it can be, but that's not the point) to justify their credentials as artists. If I may be so pretentious, The Gun & Doll Show has "something to say." Better still, their philosophical penchant reveals a healthy cynicism about human nature and a more than healthy disrespect for goody-2-shoes liberal blandishments. For example, the implication on "New American Girl," that the success or failure of the melting pot ultimately hinges on sheer carnal lust, flirts with a dangerous political incorrectness. I also like "Miracle's" rebuke of what used to be known as the "New Morality:" "*I hate that hippie trend / I'm stuck with sticking my friends.*" The clean, taut, staccato music is both attractive and "sui generis," always a neat trick, and the occasional unexpected interjections of heavy guitar distortion prove especially effective. Now, having bestowed all that praise, I must caution that the group's misanthropy threatens to sound smug at times and gets downright grotesque on the irritatingly absurd "Crazy." The ironic juxtaposition of sweet harmonies and sardonic lyrics could become an oppressively smarty-pants device if overused. As I assume they'll be smart enough to realize if they stick around. **(Fortune)** *Doug Hamilton.*

GUS Word Of Mouth CD

The first time I'd ever heard about "Adult Alternative" I wanted to puke. This was back in my college daze and it was news to me. I felt sad, because I knew it would catch on and be another demon to battle. Of course, it caught on, look at the drivel from Shawn Mullens, that's the wave to be battling against. Of Gus here could be accused of such with his Beck beats and Eagles / Jim Lauderdale strummers. The dude is melodically in-tune, and claims to go full on analog, but it doesn't sound like it. It's nice at first listen, but has a tendency to be forgotten quite easily. I have a feeling this will catch on with others. I'm too impatient for new blood. **[Almo]** *Bryan Ramirez.*

GUTTERMOUTH Gorgeous CD

Think Dead Kennedys play the Dead Milkmen. Something like that anyways. Kinda goofy, sarcastic cali-politipunk. Not bad, I must be missing something, seems like all the teenage rockers dig this. **[Nitro]** *fike.*

HADACOL Better Than This CD

I can't even start to say how good this thing is. The tunes are straight ahead and driven to their logical conclusions. It's amazing how good music can be when the players know exactly what they want to do. There's plenty of guitar driving these tunes, solid rhythm and the unexpected, but appropriate, use of accordions and mandolins and other such things. OK, some of the lyrics are a little weak, but you hardly notice at first. **(CPR)** *Scott Joyner.*

HATE DEPT. Technical Difficulties CD

If this disc is, as the promo pack proclaims, a rough / semi completed mastering, I can only imagine what the finished CD will sound like. Oh yes I can, it'll probably be as kick ass as Hate Dept.'s earlier work. The sound is a mixture of mid-80's Wax Trax-style industrial / dance, and Zoth-style EBM. 16 tracks of throbbing, pumping, grinding and pulsating industrial that takes you back a few years, which is good because industrial didn't start in 1994 with Closer. The kind of music that DJ's spin at frat parties and everyone loves, until they realize it's not popular and hate it. Another fine release from one of the many great bands on the sordid underbelly of the US industrial scene. **(Restless)** *P. Hahn.*

HAUJOBB Less CD

More or less a single from one of the finest industrial bands to emerge from Germany in recent memory. Leading what some have called the "new age of industrial dance music," Haujobb has again created intricate, complex melodies and weave them around hauntingly eerie vocals, creating a sound that, at times, sounds similar to what the Chicago label Projekt does. However, the music is more experimental, almost verging on Zoviet France and Throbbing Gristle among others. My main complaint with this, and other albums of this nature, is that you never seem to know when a song is done and another is started, making listening to the entire disc almost a necessity, which may have been the point. Regardless, this is a fine example of music as a manipulative tool. This CD makes you feel, or rather, seems to reach out and grab you. Now if they can just get their damned visa problems worked out maybe they can grace an American stage soon. **(Metropolis)** *Paul Hahn.*

COLIN HAY Transcendental Highway CD

Ok, I admit it: Back in the '80s, I liked Men At Work. Remember: "Who Can It Be Now", "Down Under" and "Be Good Johnny"? Well, Hay has grown up and I haven't, I guess. Hay's taken an "adult contemporary" approach, but I still wanna hear goofy songs about "vegemite sandwiches." He sings about lost love, inner peace, and self discovery. I wanna hear about paranoia and "Dr. Heckle and Mr. Jive". I respect the change, musically, that Hay has gone through, but I'm too young to wanna go through it with him. This disc is amazing, though. Hay takes you through a musical journey that leaves you feeling as if somehow the things we worry about on a daily basis, aren't as important as we think. In the end, none of the complicated horseshit really matters. All that matters are the basic, simple things we all take for granted. This CD caused me to question my life and realize that, maybe, I should start thinking about growing up. On the other hand... **(FMA)** *Eddie V Migraine*

DAVID HELENIAK Pearl River CD

I thought you were only supposed to get fruit and cheese baskets during the holidays. Thanks to **ETCH** for sending mine early. Sadly, most of it was overripe or too creamy. **(Little Man)** *Scott Joyner.*

THE HELLACOPTERS Grande Rock CD

These guys are from Sweden, right? They play straight-up American rock-n-roll. We're talking in the vein of Grand Funk Railroad, Bachman Turner Overdrive, MC5, The Stooges and 3 Dog Night. Who cares? The Hellacopters aren't afraid to show the world that rock music is still alive with their added sheer intensity. And the raw power is present with Grande Rock, not a single hint of alternative rock or 80's hair metal is to be found on here. **(Sub Pop)** *Demangis.*

HELLCHILD Circulating Contradictions CD

I love horror music but, for the most part, grindcore has never had much of an impression on me. I think a big part of the problem is the vocals are hard to understand and that's what makes horror rock so fun, silly and powerful. Like every other good grindcore band, HellChild printed their lyrics in the liner notes, which brings me to my next big problem with grindcore: the lyrics. I happen to like stuff about monsters and aliens, but overly gory lyrics are too blatant for me. In all fairness, HellChild are good at what they do, not stellar, but ok. Recommended. **[Howling Bull America]** *Eric Reanimator.*

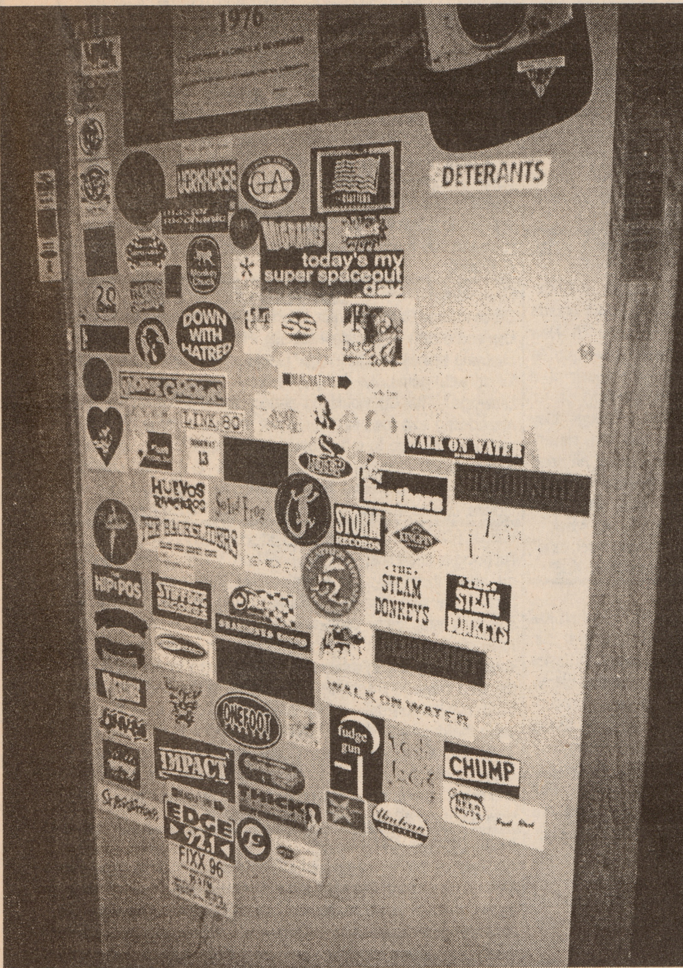
JOE HENRY Fuse CD

Michigan's own, Joe Henry, returns after 5 years with one of the best releases [so far] of '99. A studious musician and a master at turning a phrase, Joe's one of the best "unknowns" in the music business today. It wouldn't seem that way, though; **Fuse** [produced by T-bone Burnett, Rick Will and Daniel Lanois], has the musical muscle one expects from a man who's been making music for more than a decade. It certainly has Henry's trademark sound. What makes **Fuse** a great achievement after his last album, the noteworthy Trampoline, is his willingness to utilize the technology of the recording studio to its fullest. The first single, "Monkey," starts like creeping ivy, slowly gathering strength and building an atmospheric frenzy of guitar pedals and studio effects, capped with the strange line: "*I'll dress myself in your finest things / I'll chew my lip to keep it so.*" The title track deftly delivers the listener to a dark street corner after a rainstorm, the vehicles being a sparse guitar and piano. "Skin and Teeth," the most radio-friendly track here (possibly ever in Henry's career), has a touch of Galaxie 500 to it. Fingers subtly drift over bass strings, accompanied by the soft hatching of icy piano notes, before the song explodes in a great crashing of rock-n-roll. Henry's less-than-comfortable lyrics shine: "*And so it was you, lying down / This close to me, turning your back / And all it would take for you to be free / Was never enough, but too much for me.*" The middle of the album sees Henry, and his accomplished band, exploring black rhythms from the '70s. "Fat" derives its title from the barroom haze of the music; "Want Too Much" is all Isaac Hayes funk guitar; while the excellent instrumental, "Curt Flood" (named after baseball's first free agent) is a soulful free form foray into jazz, evoking the best of the sexy funk of Parliament and the Family Stone, featuring a dual of elastic guitar sounds and Billy Preston-like organs. "Like a Hammer" returns to Henry's brand of mesmerizing rock and provides a perfect platform for his guitar virtuosity. **Fuse** isn't simply a great, moody record, but a testament to musical styles that, in the hands of the less-reverential, would be grossly misrepresented. **(Mammoth)** *Bob Toole.*

HI-JINX You Can Make It! CD EP

This ska outfit from Flint, Michigan lays out a nice spread, over this 4-track EP. The horns are quick, full and bouncy, reminiscent of Detroit's late Parka Kings. The rest of the band keeps time real well too, punkin' it when called for, but lunging into midtempo ska just as easily. The 4 songs here beat the crap out of most of the mighty Jump Up's catalogue over the last 3 years. Not sure how long these fellas have been playing, but if they keep up like this, they're sure to stick around. **[Fifth Column]** *fike.*

DAVID HILLYARD AND THE ROCKSTEADY 7 Playtime CD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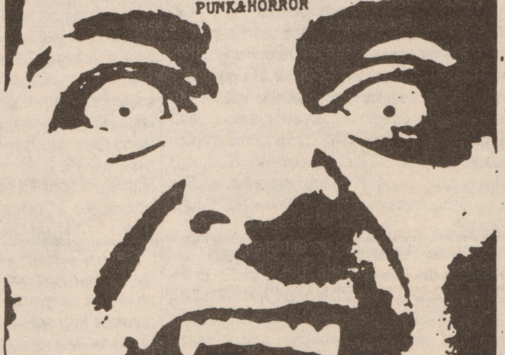

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This starts with a crazy rag and, when you think it sounds out of place, it cuts off into a straightforward ska number. And that's that, you're hooked. Trad ska noise from the man that helped to put Hepcat and the Slackers on the map. This is the proverbial "Horn-A-Plenty," featuring members from the Slackers, Stubborn All-Stars, Hepcat and the NYC Jazz Underground. In someone else's words this would be, "Da Bomb!" To the few mad-trad fans reading this, there are a few retreads; for everyone else, I couldn't pick a better introduction as to what the real ska world has to offer. This is the cream of the crop! There are very few releases with the kind of talent this has to offer; and even less where you can hear Vic Ruggerio on the keys, while Alex Dessert or Greg Lee croons away with the mad professor Dave Hillyard at the helm. Frickin' Genius! **[Hellcat]** *E. E.*

HI-TOWN DJs We Came To Groove CD

Pretty groovy rap / dance stuff. I particularly like the song that includes Kurtis Blow. I thought the version of Benny King's "Stand By Me" would be better, but it's just so-so. Not bad... **[Restless]** *G. C.*

HOBO JOE Strangers Who Belong CD

Hobo Joe plays alterna-rock in the same vein as Pearl Jam or Creed. College rock with a heavier edge. I usually trash bands like this, 'cause normally I hate 'em. For some reason, Hobo Joe is able to get past and grab me. They play with a lot of conviction. The vocals are clean and powerful. Musically, they don't break any new ground, but they do manage to kick out interesting, moving music. **(Zinger)** *E. M.*

HOUSE OF WIRES You Are Obsolete CD

Who said the '80s were dead? Not me, and certainly not House of Wires proving you can meld together 80's synth-pop with 90's electronica with astounding success. **You Are Obsolete** is the perfect blend of cold electronics and warm melodies featuring soft vocals that are reminiscent of early Depeche Mode. However, there's more to House of Wire than electronics, there's horns, accordion, sampled strings and violin. While their lack of emotion may drag the CD down a bit, the refreshing music eventually makes up for it. Stand out tunes include a cover of the Pixies "Where Is My Mind" and the beautiful "Latency." If you've got a penchant for the 80's but live in the 90's pick up **You Are Obsolete** because unlike the title, it definitely is not. **(Plastiq Muisq / Tooth & Nail)** *Mike Pfeiffer.*

HYPOTHERMEA Meant Well. . .Did Wrong CD

This is my favorite new metal band. These guys have a strong similarity to early Sabotage. [When I went through that phase in high school, Sabotage was it.] Hypothermea rips it up! The term heavy metal got a bad rap due to all the cheesy A&R packaged bands in the late-80's. This band, however, plays nasty aggressive metal, while maintaining integrity and playing with heart. It's obvious these guys aren't interested in what the current trend is. They aren't looking for what's gonna get them a quick level of acceptance, they're playing a style that's refreshing in today's world of music... their own! This rocks from start to finish, and not a clinker on the entire thing. *Eddie Van Migraine.*

HUMAN DRAMA Solemn Sun Setting CD

Longtime readers might remember raving about Human Drama's live CD a couple years. I've been waiting, anxiously, for their next release ever since. To my great joy, Human Drama's latest is finally hear! This record blew me outta my skivvies when I listened for the first time. This 16-track masterpiece proves beyond a reasonable doubt, that principle songwriter, Johnny Indovina, is one of this era's elite songwriters. The music moves from moving ballads to upbeat pop seamlessly. Indovina's lyrics are outstanding, weaving tales of love, both lost and lasting, they will haunt you. The crème of the crop on this CD is track 5, "Love's Way." It will floor you, believe me, I can't stop listening to it. This is easily one 1999's very best releases. This CD will give you hope. Highly recommended. **[Hollows Hill Sound Recordings]** *N. Zebrowski.*

INSANE CLOWN POSSE The Amazing Jeckel Brothers CD

You wanna talk about being the lone ranger out on a limb? I'm the only one at **ETCH** that has openly praised, enjoyed and supported the Wicked Clowns over the years. Make of that what you will, but Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope keep layin' 'em out and snappin' necks like it was a juggalo's Big Japan death match, and the dark carnival flows on with **The Amazing Jeckel Brothers**. The amazing thing may be the Jeckel Bros., but equally amazing is the undeniable fact that ICP keeps getting better. They've learned to take their influences and fold them neatly into their own twisted little world, giving you a track like "Another Love Song," which is easily the most musically versatile ICP song ever written. *"I'd rather cut that neck in half / I'd rather choke out that bitch ass / I'd rather chop and never stop / Because you ... my homie."* Insane Clown Posse will be going on tour with Coal Chamber and Biohazard this summer and with their now-legendary appearances on the *Howard Stern Show*, they've solidified their status as Michigan's true powerhouse. Eminem better watch his ass or he might get his neck snapped and then he *really won't* remember what his name is. Extra hero points for the lyric *"Fxxx the Beastie Boys / Fxxx The Dali Lama"* from the hit track "Fxxx the World." Juvenile? You bet. With guest appearances by Snoop Dogg and Ol' Dirty Bastard, you better buy this and lemme come over and kick you in the face. **[Island]** *D. Wood.*

INTEGRITY 2000 s/t CD

These guys have gone from metal-ish hardcore to hardcore-ish metal in the past 10 years. While this has some experimental leanings toward singer Dwid's solo project, Psywarfare, most of this isn't too far away from the sound of their last 2 albums. Basically, if you've heard Integrity in the past few years, you'll know if you want this. For everyone else out there, if you like intense dirges, with solid metal guitar-playing and bloody cough-inducing vocals that would put any Norwegian band to shame, you need to own this. A good album, with exception of a sort of country-ish song with interestingly creepy electronics, and the 2 experimental tracks tacked on to the end. More anthems to ring in the apocalypse. **[Victory]** *E. Emmitt.*

THE (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY The First Conspiracy CD

The (International) Noise Conspiracy are a combination of British Invasion-era music and social consciousness. Simple power chords and repetitious lyrics drive the point home. The song "A New Language" reminds me of "Psychotic Reaction," which gives you an idea of where the music is coming from. The lyrics speak of a language of action, revolution and liberation. Liberals don't go far enough when asking for fair labor practices and minimum wage, they want to "Abolish Work" totally. Only when man is free from slavery (work) is he able to create freely, establish his own identity, fully and without interference and free of shame. They see the equalization of the masses in "Airports": *"We're all tired of flying second class, tired of never navigating."* Become an urban guerilla says "Black Mask." I like their motto: "If you love subculture, then try counterculture!" Anarchism never felt so good. **[G-7 Welcoming Committee]** *A. S.*

IRON SAVIOR Unification CD

I've loved Helloween for more than 10 years and felt bad when Kai left the band. He seems to have done ok with Gamma Ray. If that wasn't enough, Kai found the time and inspiration to start Iron Savior as a side project. If you're looking for intense, technical and catchy metal, get this CD. **Unification** is supposed to be a "concept album." I've yet to get the "gist" of what it's supposed to be based on, aside from the wish that people all over the world leave their differences behind and unite as one. Let's get to the songs: "Coming Home" begins and it's a noteworthy opener, featuring Piet Sielck's impressive vocals. The guitars aren't as strong as I'd like, but still have a good presence. Kai is an expert of dual guitar harmonies. The next song, "Starborn," begins with fast drumming. I love the guitars harmonies. On "Deadly Slee," Piet is not alone on vocals, as Kai participates. The most important parts of the masterfully-crafted "Deadly Slee" are the guitar riffs and harmonies [I could hear them]. The back-up vocals are excellent as well. "Forces of Rage" is heavy and fits the title of the song perfectly. "Captain's Log" is a cheesy title, but serves its purpose. It tells a bit more as to what the story of this CD is about. "Brothers (of the Past)" is another fast ditty. "Eye to Eye" causes me to wonder how can they write so many great songs? It's not possible! The dual guitar harmonies are also clever. "Mind Over Matter" is fast and heavy. Is an overload of quality material from Iron Savior possible? I feel like "Jimmy Airhead" [from Rosie O'Donnel's show]. "The Battle" continues with a heavy riff; makes me want to bang my head. "Unchained" is another brisk song, with more double bass that I wish I could've heard more clearly! [I love double bass drumming] "Forevermore" is a nice ballad. "Gorgar" is a song that Kai recorded with Helloween, but this is the 1999 version and sounds up to date, as it's a bit tighter and better produced than the original. "Neon Knights" is a Black Sabbath cover and sounds quite like the original. The last song, "Dragonslayer," leads me to think that this is just filler, before I hear some of the guitars. Still, the production is different from the rest of the CD, and that makes me think that it sounds like a "demo." This is a CD that should be in everyone's collection! **[Noise]** *Gerry Cummings.*

THE JAZZ MANDOLIN PROJECT Tour de Flux CD

I'm a little suspicious of a lot of things that call themselves "jazz" nowadays. Very often it seems to be a tag thrown on by bands to garner a little more respect for their music. It fairly screams "ART!" But I love the mandolin, so I gave this thing a listen. The big danger with the mandolin is that the sweet, heavenly sound can be overdone. Much like the violin, the line between beautiful and maudlin is easy to cross unwittingly. Suffice to say these guys are in no danger of crossing that line. The arrangements are new and original mixings of mandolins with banjos and drums and who knows what else. I'm still not sure how many listens this disc will bear, but for now it's a challenging and surprising thing. **(Accurate)** *S. Joyner.*

JOHNNY VEGAS Forest Hill Drive CD

CMJ magazine says this band puts a "90's spin on the pop sounds of the '60s." Did they pay you off? That's critics for you [*Spin*, *Rolling Stone*]. They don't know what they like, and I'm willing to wager those bastards get fringe benefits when they help shoot a label's band to critical acclaim. They'd never hire someone like me, not with my big mouth. Ever since Lester Bangs cashed in and *Creem* split Detroit, the big time critics ain't worth squat. (Chuck Eddy? Christgau?) At least *ETCH* is nothing but honest, right Norm? As for Johnny Vegas, they put a new spin on Hootie and The Blowhards. Bring me the neck of *CMJ*, my mighty pen is out for blood. **(Leprechaun)** *B. R.*

JUMP WITH JOEY Swingin' Ska Goes South of the Border CD

Afro-Cuban jazz as envisioned and felt through ska man Joey Altruda and his gang of upstarts. The truth is, nothing on any independent label should sound this amazing. This man has worked with the best (see: Roland Alphonso, Tommy McCook and any other Skatellite of your choice), yet delivers in full with a band handpicked by Altruda himself. No real "stars" here, with exception to the vocal duties as toasted by Freddie Crespo (of the Latin Costa Azul) or the soulful crooning of Alex Dessert (of Hepcat & TV's *Becker* fame), just the mad trad flavor. Eight originals. Four covers. You already know if you need this. If you like your ska like I do, You do. 'Nuff said. **[Will]** *E. Emmitt.*

DAMIEN JURADO Rehearsals For Departure CD

Urban folkster Damien Jurado offers 10 intimate vignettes of longing, loss and sorrow on his latest release. He occasionally veers into the annoying whiney category (skip "Eyes For Windows"), but makes up for it with gems like "Ohio," "Honey Baby" and "Letters and Drawings." The CD would be perfect accompaniment for a long, meandering solo road trip. The driver is in no hurry to be anywhere and uses the time to reflect back on the ache and ecstasy of past relationships. There's no resolution, but that only makes the situations more universal. Endings are only neatly packaged in the movies. Jurado, like life, just moves on. **[Sub Pop]** *Jamie DePolo.*

KELETON DMD Possibly the World 7"

I'm going to tread softly with this one. I can't think of one bad word to say about these guys. Truly a class act, they're group that flat out berates you with their music. Beside being on a compilation and a split tape with fellow partners-in-crime, Small Brown Bike, this is Keleton's first release. To try and pigeonhole Keleton's aggro-driven sound into any certain category is baffling. "Emo" doesn't quite fit into the card catalog. The brash brilliant style of the Melvins comes to mind, but Keleton doesn't joke around. And don't even think about using the dreaded "M word." Black Sabbath they aren't. To say this 7" flat out rocks, sounds like *Guitar World* describing a new Van Halen record. I'm at a loss for words here, fellas. I'm not gonna try and come up with some big words to sum up what this 7" really is. How about great? **[Makoto]** *Chris Wardell.*

kent ISOLA CD

Oh Jeezus, this is my favorite CD of the last four months. Every damn song is great. Their live show (reviewed elsewhere) clenched it for me, these guys are possessed with uber-talent and have the drive and energy to make it big. They're on a level playing field with Radiohead, Oasis and The Verve, and that's quite a statement to make. They don't rip off the aforementioned bands, but seem to come up with this god-like music from their little chateau's in the Swedish countryside, as if they made up this wall of sound, shoegazer-style on their own. This CD is a solid "10" in my book. If it's only a "six" or "seven" for you, see them live [if you can] and all will be clear -- crystal clear. **[RCA]** *CBH3.*

KING RADIO Mr. K Is Dead, Go Home CD

On this CD, King Radio a five-piece from Massachusetts fronted by ex-Scud Mountain Boy Frank Padellaro, sound at various times like Big Star, Uncle Tupelo and The Sonics. An appreciation of '60s pop songs and their hooks is the unifying factor, so what on paper sounds like a strife-filled marriage is actually a harmonious union. The lyrics are as much fun as the music, full of quirky wit and intelligence. "King of the Food Court" took me back to my high school days of working at a roller rink snack bar -- it wasn't the mall, but the feelings were the same. Is it alt-country? I don't think so, but who cares? This CD is like a Blizzard / Breeze / Tornado (pick your ice cream outlet) on a hot summer day: frothy, sugary, a little chunky and mighty satisfying. **[Tar Hut]** *Jamie DePolo.*

KUNG FU RICK s/t 7"

Following in the tradition of My Lai, MK Ultra, Los Crudos and Charles Bronson comes Kung Fu Rick. Bleak, political, Mid-Western grind-core which has been done countless times before, but never ceases to get old. **(EA / Up Jumps the Devil)** *Demangis.*

LEATHERFACE / HOT WATER MUSIC BYO Split Series, Vol. 1 CD

I'm kicking myself pretty hard for all the years that I've been missing out on Leatherface. I mean I've heard all this hype about how good these guys were, but either I could never find their records or I was too cheap to shell out a couple extra bucks on import prices. How foolish I have been. Seriously, the Leatherface side of this split absolutely rocks. Husker Du-meets-Motorhead with the adrenaline cranked up through the roof. And with Frankie Stubbs gravely, sand paper like-vocals, it's a wonder how many bottles of whiskey and packs of cigarettes his vocals chords have endured. The Hot Water Music side is pretty all right, "an easier to swallow Fugazi" is the best description I've heard, but nothing that really sticks out in comparison to their other releases. I'll give them the benefit of the doubt considering whom they're sharing this release with. **(BYO)** *Demangis.*

LIMP Guitarded CD

Listenable, mellow, radio-sounding pop punk. If there were "alternative dentists," you'd probably hear music like this in their waiting rooms. Not terrible, but nothing to beat up your sister over either. Ho-hum. **(Honest Don's)** *fike.*

LIQUID TENSION EXPERIMENT s/t CD

Music, as an art form, has fragmented and mutated, evolving extensively since "prog rock" bands like Dream Theatre and King Crimson ruled the innovation end of Mega-Fauna rock band ecology, during the great Heavy Metal epoch from the late-70s to mid-80s. The Yngwie Malmsteens, Joe Satrianis and the artists on this disc (Tony Levin [King Crimson], Mike Portnoy and John Petrucci [Dream Theater]) were the dead-ends of branches in the evolutionary tree of music, displaced by opportunistic new organisms that found ways to thrive, prosper and multiply in environs where the former would have shriveled and died. This "Experiment" could have actually helped to bring this type of music back from the brink of extinction. Levin's bass playing is very organic and unique, and Portnoy is the type of non-genre-specific percussionist that could probably fill in for any drummer, in any band, on any given night. The problem is Petrucci and his "diddly-diddly-diddly" guitar virtuoso soloing racket, found almost every song. If you'd like to hear exactly what Petrucci sounds like, head on down to your local guitar store and make your way back into the amplifier room. I guarantee that right now some 30- to-40-year-old guy is sitting there with an Ibanez plugged into an effects rack shredding away as good, and most likely a little better than Petrucci. This style of guitar playing is generic and artless. It's been Xeroxed to perfection by millions, and survives through those who conceived it, like Malmsteen and Petrucci and all of the studio-musician hopefuls hanging out in guitar shops. The only song on the CD with worth noting is the strangely expansive "Osmosis," mostly because the guitar is almost non-existent. **[Magna Carta]** *Sam Rose.*

LITTLE PORK CHOP Welcome to Little Pork Chop CD

Back from the dead, Jerry Teel has once again teamed up with Lisa Jayne, formerly with the once-great Honeymoon Killers. This time around, their age shows a little: less trash, more country. Little Pork Chop mix it up with greasy diner-rock (the insert has a photo of them at a greasy spoon); a blend of covers (Gram Parsons, Carter Family, etc.) and originals. Nothing's been lost over the years, though. They still know how to burn through a dirty blues cover. Lisa sings half, Jerry the others. Little Pork Chop mix it up with old-time country, gritty blues, 50's garage and Detroit soul. I don't care how old these people get, their records are magnets. I'm gone. **[Sympathy for the Record Industry]** *Davis Ford.*

THE LIZARDS Spazzmatic CD

32 spazz punk classics in the same vein as early Dickies. The production even sounds like early Dickies! The singer sounds like Leonard from the Dickies! I wonder if they like the Dickies? Anyhow, this is a fun listen and I might get everyone this disc for Christmas. Along with their completely nutty, goofy, original punk rock, they've also been so kind as to include cool covers for your listening enjoyment. They cover a couple of Ramones' tunes, CCR, Hank Williams and Sesame Street's theme song. What more could you want? **(Very Small)** *Eddie V Migraine.*

THE LONESOME ORGANIST Cavalcade CD

The circus is back in town! The Lonesome Organist, again plays ringmaster in a tent full of crazy performers, all played by himself. One can't help recalling old Looney Tunes cartoons, where they'd pull out the one-man-band contraption and light up the decibel meter. This second outing doesn't stray too far from his first, except that he's mastered new instruments (bowed / struck-saw, sax, samples). On top of that, his arsenal includes any number of guitars, pianos, organs, steel drums, tap shoes, harmonica and percussion instruments. **Cavalcade** is half-instrumental, involving bizarre musical "ditties" that sound like the background ambience found at a freak show. Melodica and chime piano waltz along to gypsy patterns and, occasionally, he feels the urge to yodel over it. On "Flew Out My Window," he plays a sort of "Southwestern country-rock riff" on guitar and sings through a distortion pedal; all the while, the bowed-saw eerily wafts over the top. I'm completely stumped at this point, because The Lonesome Organist vows to play all of these instruments simultaneously. How anyone can play guitar and the bowed-saw at the same time is beyond me. His live show should explain everything. Having witnessed it once, I became a believer, but **Cavalcade** has posed new challenges which I want to see executed. **[Thrill Jockey]** *Davis Ford.*

LOUDMOUTH s/t CD

Somewhere in this issue, there should be a Sacrifice Isaac CD that I reviewed. When I first began listening to Loudmouth, I thought: "Am I still listening to Sacrifice Isaac?" Well, of course not! But I was almost fooled! I tell you, some of this band's sound is similar. Are they metal? Grunge? Alternative? Or just plain rock? Well, should I judge? Anyway, "Fly" sounds like something I've heard before. "No Heroes" does too. Maybe it's because I remember when Detroit used to have "Z-Rock" and how, on its last legs, this was the type of crap they used to play. Since Loudmouth is signed with Hollywood Recs, I bet this is what's big at clubs in Hollywood. Hell, "No Heroes" sounds like it might fit the intro of *Melrose Place*! You know? When the show is about to start and they put up the credits of the guest stars and the director! They always put some band over the credits. This sounds like something for Hollywood, not Detroit, and certainly not for me. **[Hollywood]** *Gerry Cummings.*

LOVE HUSKIES Sparks Street CD

I hear there's a government factory somewhere in this country that actually process bands and tunes like American cheese via micro chips and robots. The campaign is to save mediocrity and present it to college students as a sort of safehouse for entertainment and...maybe...our children. If you look into the eyes of the Love Huskies, via the picture on their CD, you'll notice their eyes...little red beams...they're coming after you and the only way to save yourself is to...Ignore them! **[Gotham]** *Bryan Ramirez.*

LUNGBRUSH Old School / New School CD

The viciousness begins rapidly; no time to breathe! Get in line! Lungbrush is here! The heavy stuff is about to begin! Without a doubt, very heavy indeed. My criticisms? I could say that the vocals sound a bit like Pantera, but I won't. Some won't like Lungbrush's message. My only other peeve is their name! Who came up with it? Anyway, I like their message of understanding, compassion, and self control. Kids, listen up! Lungbrush tells it like it is on songs like "Urban Tribes," "Lost," "Sometimes," and "Exit." Actually, all of the songs have a positive message, specially the aforementioned "Exit:" a song against suicide! A metal band with a mission! Thank God! **[Pavement Music]** *Gerry Cummings.*

LUNG LEG Maid to Minx CD

This band is cool for a number of reasons. First of all, they're from Glasgow, so they sing in really neat-o accents. Second, they produce girly pop reminiscent of Heavenly. In addition, the band looks like characters straight out of Quadrophenia. Finally, the cover art on the CD is courtesy of Love & Rockets comic artist, Jamie Hernandez. If you're a fan of girly indie stuff, this is a definite must. **(Southern)** *R. Overmyer.*

LUSSIER, TETRAULT Dur Noyau Dur CD

Dur Noyau Dur consists of Rene Lussier on guitar and Martin Tetrault on turntables. Tetrault does very little "scratching," instead he exploits the mechanics of the turntable, successfully managing to extract every possible sound he can from it. Lussier provides the perfect accompaniment to his strategy by examining all of the guitar's physical possibilities. Together, they've made one of the finest records of the year -- hands down. At times, Lussier attacks the guitar in Derek Bailey fashion, sending a blitzkrieg of notes across the canvas. At others, he remains calm and reserved, only lightly, sparingly offering small phrasings. Tetrault responds with the repetitive iterations of the needle smacking the center pole and bouncing back (only to begin the process once again). This only skims the epidermis of Tetrault's arsenal. The records he chooses are unrecognizable, but there's plenty of background grumbling and ambient storm waves. Crackling frequencies bubble and spew, while Lussier provides mood via spare notes. Their timing is amazing. A climactic situation involves Lussier repetitively striking the same note sequence, while Tetrault builds a tremendous roar, involving actual mechanical turntable sounds in conjunction with the "out-there" selections he's manipulating on the mat. Tetrault has even managed to record what sounds like the internal gears "whirring." The listener gets to experience firsthand the trials and tribulations of the turntable as Tetrault abuses every single aspect of it. Brilliant. **[Ambiances Magnetiques]** *Davis Ford.*

LUSTRE KING Shoot the Messenger CD

One thing is certain; Lustre King had a lot of fun writing song titles. **Shoot the Messenger** contains tracks like, "Don't Kid the Midget," "Imaginary People Show Up All the Time" and, my personal favorite, "Christmas In My Pussy." These "light-hearted" words, however, are not indicative of the music they play. Songs are pretty hard–edged and unrefined, similar to that of the 90 Day Men. What makes this CD especially interesting, is that it uses elements of math rock matched with that of trip-hop in spots. Definitely not your typical hardcore band. **(Southern)** *R. Overmyer.*

THE MAD BUTCHERS Lucky CD

I'm sorry. I hate ska, but I'll try and be fair. I can stand ska *if* it's mixed with a generous portion of punk. This, fortunately, has some good punk in it, but it's always got those dang horns ruining the beloved distortion and the rest of the speeding mayhem. I'll bet they'd be a great straight-forward punk band, but they're not. If you're into ska your gonna love this. **(Drah No!)** *Chad Overdose.*

MAD TRUCKER GONE MAD s/t EP

Yeeehaaaw! Truck drivin' rock-n-roll. Good drivin' music. I can see myself with my hands on the steering wheel of a big ol' 18-wheeler, flying by fields and farmland. Don't get me wrong, there ain't no country muzak here, just good ol' originality. Swingin' punk rock-n-roll. The more I hear it, the more I like it. What a killer name for a band, too. **[Crustacean]** *Chad.*

MAN...OR ASTROMAN? Eeviac: Operational Index and Reference Guide, Including other Modern Computational Devices CD

Straight from the Grid Sector comes the best damn surf rock you'll ever hear played by aliens. The newest CD by the Astromen includes B movie samples against a wall of guitars. The album is consistently good surf with sparse non-surf tracks thrown in for good measure. **(Touch & Go)** *R. Overmyer.*

JOE MCBRIDE Double Take CD

Too bad I don't get paid by the line -- please see the Bill Morrissey review. **(Heads Up)** *Scott Joyner.*

THE MCRACKINS Comicbooks and Bubblegum CD

This is exactly what you'd expect from them: syrupy-sweet pop songs so catchy you forget how well they play guitar. While nothing that hit me like "Teenage Valentino" did a few albums ago, "Superman (We Need Help)" is damn close. Besides, this is probably the more solid album anyway. Crazy Canadian pop punk with egg and chicken suits. "Mohawks need not apply..." **[Coldfront]** *E. Emmitt.*

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES Are a Drag CD

By now the greater population knows about Me First...and their gathering, one by one, of bigger-name (NOFX, Lagwagon, Swingin' Udders, No Use For a Name) band members to acquire formation of the band. Their snotty / sweet harmonies work incredibly well when regarding familiar Broadway hits, as performed on this, their second full-length. It's apparent that these guys take their musical joke seriously (why shouldn't they?) and belt out 12 heartfelt stage themes with signature sped-up pop punk catchiness. While every track provides us with good time fun, a few stand out as real crowd-pleasers. "Summertime," starts out nice and slinky and explodes into a total rock-out. Interpretations of Dorothy singing "Over the Rainbow" and of Annie's anthem "Tomorrow," are not far cries from their originals and prove that the quintuplet can indeed provide the kids with a novelty other than 70's songs. **[Fat Wreck Chords]** *L. C.*

MEKONS I Have Been To Heaven And Back CD

A nifty lil' number for Mekons' completists [and the uninitiated as well], featuring b-sides, unreleased album tracks and a Rod Stewart cover ["You Wear It Well"] recorded in the '80s and '90s. It also features the "full" version of their classic "This Funeral is for the Wrong Corpse." Although their last couple of albums, featuring all new material, were duds, this cut-n-paste comp makes it obvious why the Mekons are one of the most important bands in the world now [as they have been for the last 15 years]. Recommended. **[Quarterstick]** *Norman Zebrowski.*

MENTALLO & THE FIXER Algorythum CD

When I first heard the Dassing brothers it was 5 years ago [if memory serves], and I remember thinking, "It's nice that we still have original industrial acts here in the States after NIN. There was a reason that Wax Trax was such a huge label in the 80's and this is a fine testimony to that. Hard, heavy bass beats mixed with swirling samples create a vortex of sound that encompasses your head, you have no choice but to almost ignore the vocals. Nevertheless, they are there, at a point where you don't consciously hear them; as if they're meant to reach you subconsciously. However, by this album they are much more experimental, allowing elaborate intro and exit beds to lure you into the soft middle, which is the core of the song. At times, these songs have a Gothic feel, with their live instruments blending nicely with their digital cohorts. By far the finest M&TF album I've heard. I'd be interested to see them again and get lost in this band again. **(Metropolis)** *P. Hahn*

METROSCHIFTER / SHIPPING NEWS s/t split-CD

Metroschifter and the Shipping News are 2 good bands that taste great together; both being from the incestuous Louisville scene. Metroschifter offers a great first rock track, complete with otherworldly synth noises, followed by a 2nd slower, moody track and then finishes triumphantly with a tight, forceful punk song. Shipping News, featuring guys formerly of Rodan (surprise, surprise), contributes 3 live songs that attest to their talent for meandering and improvising. **(Initial)** *R. Overmyer.*

MOB 9 304 CD

Mob 9 hail from Ft. Wayne, IN and are, pretty much, the purveyors of hardcore [ala Korn] in that fair city. Most of the songs are dark. It's hard to make out the lyrics due to lots o' yellin', as is true with most hardcore, but rhythmically Mob 9 is very good. The emphasis is not on the melody, but on the brutal delivery of heavy metal guitar with a driving heavy metal-meets-funk drum style. On "Technicolor" the band makes an attempt at (dare I say it?) a commercial approach. Again, this is much in the same way that Korn is commercial, not in the way that Matchbox 20 is. *Eddie Migraine.*

MONOLAKE Interstate CD

Listening to **Interstate**, the first assumption is that the walls are made of some newly developed material which resonates sound continually. Akin to a racquetball with a mind of its own, the sound emanates from all angles and seems to outlive any predictable path as they bounce off everything. On top of that, there are so many components that make up a song, that it's a dizzying experience trying to process them all as they are reflected from all surfaces. Even more notable, the timing Monolake employs is multi-layered, making the whole listening process almost too complicated to bear. This would be true if it weren't for the type of sounds that Monolake uses: soft bass thumps, high-treble snare snaps, bubbling digital water, soothing synth washes. The final product is entirely relaxing, but it also serves the dual function of making you think about processing at the same time. This CD is almost based around the algorithm of a decelerating bouncing ball. Sure, Aphex Twin, Autechre, etc. have explored this, but with Monolake, the algorithm is looping, and the 3-dimensional audio they've layered throughout make it sound so rich, full and complicated that it stands in its own category. Underneath this matrix is a typical Chain Reaction album. The thumping 2/4 bass is almost always present, along with the soft synth repetitions that slowly synch in and out of time. The complicated mixture of the final product, though, makes **Interstate** a dizzying, worthwhile mind-game. [**Imbalance Computer Music (ML/I)**] *Davis Ford.*

BILL MONROE & HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS Live from Mountain Stage CD

The death of the "Father of Bluegrass" in 1996 has since created renewed interest in his remarkable career and musical legacy. As a reaction to this, several live recordings of Bill Monroe have come out in the ensuing years, yet none captures how truly amazing he was in his last few years better than **Live from Mountain Stage**. Recorded in 1989, you'd never guess that the fellow doing the marvelous mandolin picking and high tenor singing had been collecting social security for 15 years [Bill was 78] and had been singing on the Grand Ole Opry for just under 50 years. This album is part of the *Mountain Stage* series, a weekly radio show recorded live at the Capitol Plaza Theatre in Charleston, WV. Until now, the folks at Blue Plate have only released compilations with the various artists who've appeared on the program -- this is the first such album to contain an entire performance from one single performer. But, as the liner notes state, if anyone deserves to be an exception, it's Bill Monroe. Bill and the Boys rip through a rousing version of "Muleskinner Blues" where, towards the end, Bill holds a note long enough to make the hair on the back of your neck stand straight up and send a severe chill down your spine. Also note the amazing mandolin picking on "Southern Flavor", one of several instrumental tracks. Having had the great fortune of seeing Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys a few years later in 1994, I can say that this fine display of musicianship so late in life was not the exception, but an amazing display of drive and ambition on a nightly basis. How fortunate we are that he didn't decide to sit back and reflect on days gone by. (**Blue Plate**) *D. Neal.*

BILL MORRISSEY Songs of Mississippi John Hurt CD

Morrissey covers a whole bunch of John Hurt's songs. Too fruity. Somebody else should have done it. (**Philo**) *Scott Joyner.*

MU330 s/t CD

I've heard a bunch of stuff from these guys on different compilations, and on the radio (college, NPR, etc..), and always liked them. Saw them at the *Warped Tour* last year on one of the side stages and dug it a lot. They have a lot of beautiful young female fans, too! Sadly, this CD is nothing like what I've heard in the past from MU330, way too much candy cracker ska-y horns, not enough of the pop-punk, and it all seems a bit off, especially the vocals. Maybe that's the production, or my own selective listening in the past. Whichever, I prefer to think they've gone off on too much of a tangent, and hope they get back to the sound that won me over. This may cause them to lose some of the aforementioned young female fans, and their centerfolds in Tiger Beat, but is it really asking all that much? (Asian Man) *fike.*

MUCHO MACHO The Limehouse Link CD

Besides despising the name "Mucho Macho," which makes me think of that old SNL gig "We're Mucho Macho, and we're here to pump you up!" I didn't care much for their music, either. Their sound is the Big Beat electronica involving a great wall of danceable grooves, but once beyond that wall, it's easy to hear there is nothing supporting it. While I enjoy the catchy electro of "Rap Is Really Changing" I wonder what the point is. If there is no rap in this song -- what do they mean by rap is really changing? Or, was the sample so catchy it could have said "Velveeta is really creamy" and Mucho Macho would still have used it. I guess when you're doing it up on the dance floor, you don't worry about that layer beneath the music. In the end, Mucho Macho succeeds only as Big Beat usually does with each track managing to grab my attention, but never really holding it. (**Beggars Banquet**) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

MUDDFOOT s/t CS

Original music is great, except when you're trying to describe it. That's where I always get stuck when writing reviews. I find myself babbling on, beating around the bush, hoping you'll forget what you're reading. It's not working though, is it? Let's see... the vocals are sung (as opposed to screamed or grunted, dummy), while the music fluctuates between heavy rock and punk. I liked their last tape better than this, but they're still a group of unique and talented musicians. Sorry, that's the best I can do. Oh yeah, they're from New York. How's that?! *Chad.*

THE MUFFS Alert Today Alive Tomorrow CD

Just in time for summer, Honest Don's have released the new Muffs' album, after the band allegedly got the boot from Reprise. Fate works in mysterious ways, as the band has produced their best full-length to date, I dare say better than Blonder & Blonder. Kim Shattuck (guitar / vocals), Ronnie Barmet (bass) and Roy McDonald (guitars) offer up pop songs with strong rock undertones. Shattuck has a powerfully gritty voice, that grabs you hook, line and sinker. I can envision me and the peeps (my girls) sitting around the ol' apartment with some Black Label in hand, swaying and singing along. As they would say, "This is so cute, you could eat it with a spoon." "Prettier Than Me," a track complete with chimey guitars and heartfelt lyrics stands out as a favorite. (**Honest Don's**) *R. Overmyer.*

MUSTARD PLUG Pray For Mojo CD

Didn't think it was possible. Never thought it would happen. But Jesus, Mary and JoJo if local hero's Mustard Plug haven't gone out and topped themselves with their new release, **Pray For Mojo**. Mustard Plug's last record, Evildoers Beware, was one of the most listened to CD's of the year. I'm not kidding, I literally wore out my first copy and hadda get a 2nd. This, their 4th full-length, shows that Mustard Plug has grown both musically and lyrically. Track 5, "Away From Here," is one of the most important songs they've ever written. "*When I see you / And I know that you don't see me / I try to remember how it must be / To walk this world alone / To walk this world alone / To carry on and do it on your own / With everybody working and everybody trying / Put your hands in the air while their lying / Everybody doing their best at realizing / As we watch we see you falling further / The world's in custody for your murder / Is there any hope for you / Is there anything we can do?*" Without going into too much detail, let's just say that the lyrics to this song mean a lot to me and have helped me get through a rough period lately. When music can touch you in that way, inspire you to move forward and keep up the struggle, it transcends all boundaries and becomes so much more. Lest you think "Away From Here" is the only song on the CD, "Not Giving In" also contains some very inspirational lyrics that again show a side of Mustard Plug that I'm not sure that everybody picks up on. "*I'm giving up / But I'm not giving in / I'll make a Stand / Not to stand in line.*" Although their brand of punk-ska is as upbeat as the genre might suggest, lyrically they've grown more comfortable with expressing deeper emotions and ideas than in previous releases. "*Can't punch that clock / Can't walk that walk / Abhor that rut / It never stops / It's time you gotta see.*" I think all of us who bang away at a job of any variety can relate to those sentiments. If you're already a fan of Mustard Plug then I'm not telling you anything you don't already know, but "Pray For Mojo" is one of those rare finds in music today. This is a CD that keeps on going the extra mile, this CD works hard for your undivided attention and earns it in spades, this is a 5-star release from one of the best bands in the world and this is one of the best CD's of '99. What a way to close out the century, who cares about Y2K when you have material like this to ponder. [**Hopeless**] *D. Wood.*

NARNIA Awakening CD

As soon as I heard the opening strains of the first song, I was hooked. When I took the CD home, I found out that Narnia is a "Christian group"...er, duo...that play amazing metal music. Man! The guitar player, obviously influenced by Yngwie Malmsteen, almost puts Malmsteen to shame! The first song, "Break the Chains" is a scorcher! I almost immediately get a sense...that...well...I don't know. The 2 song, "No More Shadows from the Past," is another amazing song, and I again get the sense that, well, maybe not. After the next songs, "The Return of Aslan" and "Heavenly Love", I decided to read the lyrics...and yes! This is how I found out they're Christians. 10 years ago, I would've had trouble with that. I liked Stryper, but I thought they bashed Christianity over my head. Well, I've grown up, and I can dig the message. Narnia is a good band with a good message. Better than Manson and his "do drugs" mantra. Narnia rules for eternity! [**Nuclear Blast**] *Gerry Cummings.*

NAZARETH Boogaloo CD

For nearly 30 years, Nazareth's been burning up the road with their brand of rock-n-roll. It's fitting that this band, who never truly "left," should make a very public "return" louder and prouder than ever. From the opening chords of "Light Comes Down," a hard-driving tune best represented by this lyric, "*Hey Mama, wanna know why I am never lonely?*" to the final orchestral fadeout of "May Heaven Keep You," this CD re-sets the standard for quality rock-n-roll. Some of the stops in-between deserve particular attention, most notably, "Party in the Kremlin" and "God Save the South." Each is worthy of endless radio play [even in these days of directionless radio programming]. **Boogaloo** is as close as this band could've come to summing up their entire career on one record [without that having been their intent]. This record works because it's effortless and uncontrived. Whiskey-drenched rock-n-roll, with gravel-n-glass vocals that can still make the little girls cry. Conversely, the listener is prone to neck strain from head-bobbing along to the near metal guitar riffs. This is blow-the-roof-off arena rock and "butcher knife toting nanny" roadhouse blues all on one sweaty silicon disc. It might not surpass Hair of the Dog in the hearts and minds of the average fan, but it's a serious challenger and rightly so. Should there be a box set in the band's future, this should be included, intact and unmolested in any way. It's perfect as it is. [**CMC International**] *David Lee.*

THE NECESSARY EVILS The Sicko Inside Me CD

There's good lo-fi punk here, once you get past the space-electronica-feedback bits they put in between almost every song. Stylistically, it's on the heavier side of lo-fi, with lots of feedback, distortion and evil lyrics about alcohol, space, brainwashing and other fun stuff. Most of the songs are good, but it's admittedly hard to get through the between-song effects, and the songs that aren't that good tend to drag. The best songs include "Glory Hole," "Alcohol" and "Drag Pow Wow Drag." I'd recommend this to lo-fi fans with good fast forward buttons on their CD-players. There's a lot of good music there, it's just a matter of getting to it. [**In The Red**] *Karp.*

NERVES New Animal CD

I booked these gents at Mac's [in L-town], but unfortunately I missed 'em. Needless to say, after hearing from numerous people what an amazing show the Nerves put on, I was chagrinned. I was even more doleful when this gem arrived here at **ETCH**. Normally, Thrill Jockey sends Davis Ford review copies directly, so it was a bit of a surprise, not to mention boon, when I opened the package and slapped it on the ol' CD player here in the office. In a word: Wow! Super snotty 60's-tinged garage punk that'll waylay the unsuspecting. I'm usually not hip to the garage genre, but this CD has tweaked my interest. Brutal music, wicked lyrics, driving rhythms and a singer that sounds like a cross between Nick Cave and Jeffrey Lee Pierce [Gun Club], make up a potent mix. Hey, punky-punker, you want raw, non-formulaic, major label-spurned p-rawk that hurts more then yer lover yanking yer nose-ring? You won't be hearing this on *Party of Five* or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. [**Thrill Jockey**] *n.z.*

MIKE NESS Cheating at Solitaire CD

Mike Ness' first solo release, **Cheating At Solitaire**, shows the maturation of a rebellious, angst-ridden boy to an angst-ridden man, self-supporting via his own contributions. This is apparent in the stylistic evolution of Social Distortion, from 1982's, Mommy's Little Monster, though this '99 release. Although different from the glory days of Mommy's Little Monster, this release was exactly what I had anticipated -- an acoustic-oriented album, heavily-influenced by blues, Johnny Cash, rock-n-roll and, of course, punk rock. **Cheating At Solitaire** shows the versatility and talent that Mike Ness possesses. All of the tracks on this CD are fantastic, and there are guest appearances by Bruce Springsteen, Brian Setzer and members of the Royal Crown Revue. "Rest Of Our Lives" is a poetic ballad that captures the essence of true love sought by all, found by few, causing tears of disbelief in someone who truly has it. "Dope Fiend Blues" reveals the utter chaos and escalating despair of drug addiction. Overall, **Cheating At Solitaire** has in its clutches the epitome of love, its loss and glamour, and the allegorical human tendency towards self-deceit that is ultimately degrading and destructive. (**Time Bomb**) *Toni Jedlowski.*

NEW MATH Wake the Dead CD

Wonderful compilation of old new wave / horror pop music from upstate New York's recently reunited New Math. The music [compiled by Gary Trainer] comes from records released in the early '80s [1981's "Older Women" b/w "The Restless Kind" 7", 1982's They Walk Among You record and 1984's Gardens LP. There are also live tracks from 1983 thrown in as well.]. The 18 songs here sound a tad dated, but still there's enough talent, ingenuity and quality music for you to enjoy. Bands like this sowed the seeds for "alternative music," as well as this generation's indie rockers. There are no bands that I can think of to compare New Math to, which makes this CD all the more enjoyable. On top of everything else, this CD also serves as a great history lesson, giving first-timers a taste of what was "cutting edge" some 15–years ago. It's a keeper. [**Reanimator**] *N. Zebrowski.*

NEW MONGRELS Big Cup Of Empty CD

This collection was the brainchild of strays and musicians on loan, with its central focus as a roaming bunch of muses (LA, Munich, Athens, Seattle), collecting this-n-that and slapping this "Americana" stuff on CD. Players from other camps include: Big Fish Ensemble, Push, The Drakes and –gasp-- The Indigo Girls. Before you get too excited, and gotta have it to fill your Amy / Emily collection, the ladies appear on only a few tunes (Oh, you must by it! Buy the Japanese import too!). Remember, it's the songs, not the singers. Everyone involved does their job effectively, but you run into plenty of bumps on this road. For one, there are a lot of cooks in this little kitchen that push this by leaps and bounds. It easily runs from samples to all out acoustic, from this ethereal hootin' on keyboards to dumb sounding standard rock stuff. It's good to jump around from genre to genre, but to jam it all onto one CD makes it sound like a comp more than anything else. Another low point: the songs themselves aren't that strong, and sometimes the singing is pretty busy (the song, not the singer). There are some effective moments here and there, with its acoustic side. Alas, Indigo fans will force themselves to like it,

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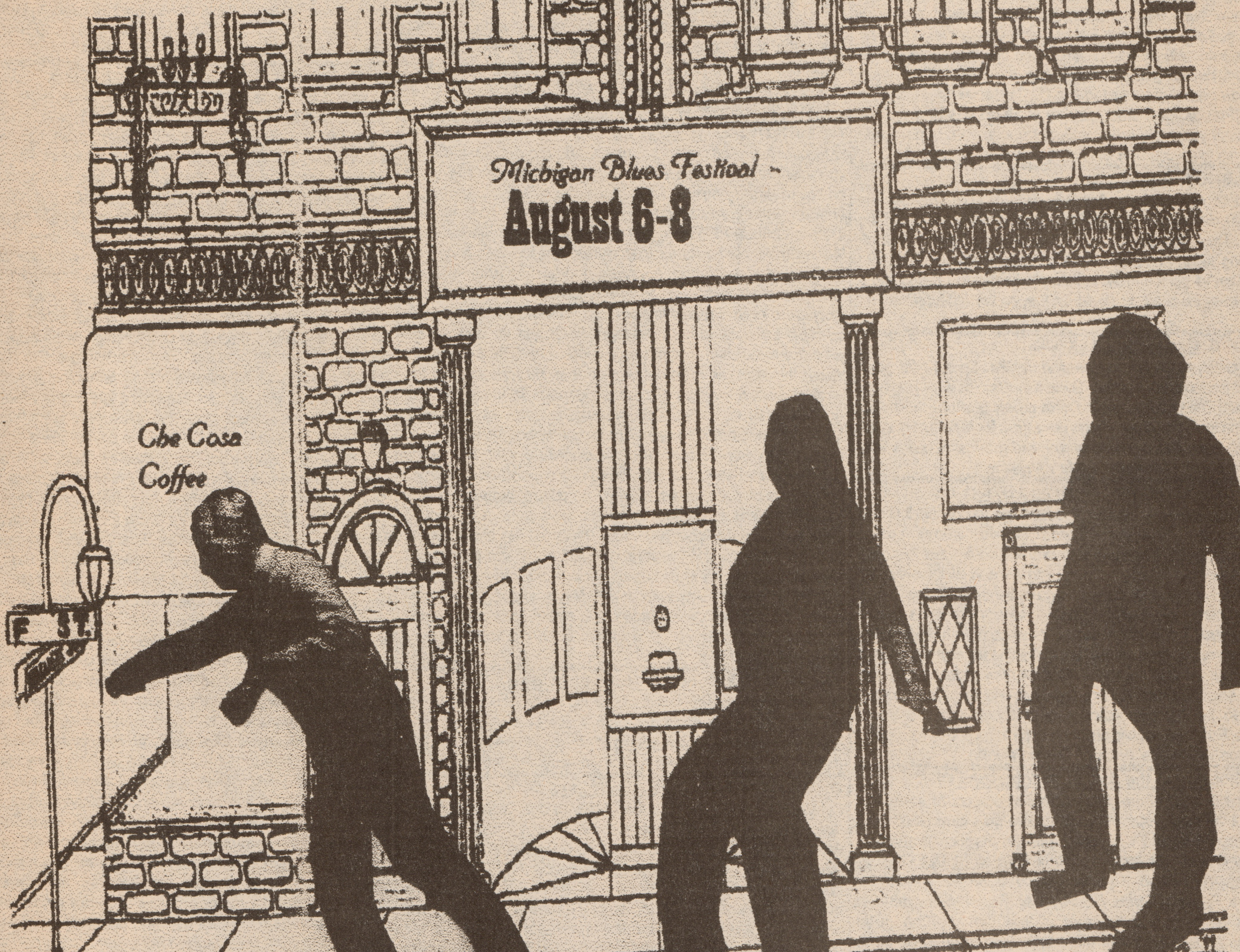
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because they have to. All others listen carefully to one tune at a time, don't rush. **[Daemon]** *Bryan Ramirez.*

THE NEW YORK ROOM The Colour of Midnight CD

I love getting free stuff! When I got this from my friend Tom, I thought it looked like a metal CD. Once I listened to it, the ominous sounds let me know that I was in trouble, this wasn't metal, but vampire music? Yes, that's what I think this is! Gothic and dark sounding, the songs are extremely melodic! There's even one that is called "The Doors from Heaven" (I'm translating from the French title). I can't believe how often I've listened to this CD. I especially liked "Season in Hell," "Prelude," and "The Anatomy of Melancholy." I loved the whole disc. If you're into doom or Goth music to suck blood to (are you listening to me Joe O.?), then get this. **[Saint Thomas]** *G. C.*

NICKELSHOT Rudell CD

Loud and aggressive, not unlike Powerface or Coal Chamber. I'm listening to Nickleshot's **Rudell** CD based entirely on seeing the band live. They threw down a tight set of blistering hardcore that left me wanting more. Sadly, this under-produced freshman effort ain't quite it. They've got the music in them, Nickelshot just has to find a way to release the beast on plastic like they do live. **[Nobdyukno]** *D. Wood.*

NOBODYS Generation XXX CD

Go immediately to the record store and buy this! Do not pass go. If the guy at the record store doesn't have it in stock, beat his little limp-wristed butt! The Nobodys are the most politically incorrect bunch o' bastards on the national punk front. I love them for it! As it says in the CD, Chuck Berry was born to play rock and roll, The Nobodys were born to destroy it! **(Hopeless)** *Eddie V Migraine.*

NO INNOCENT VICTIM Flesh and Blood CD

Victory brings the world another fine hardcore record. No Innocent Victim's record is full of medium-paced modern hardcore. Lots of jugg-jugging guitars, sing-along choruses and vocals that I've been trying to figure out for days. I'm not into the sort of thing that No Innocent Victim and other current hardcore bands are doing, mostly because I can't make out the lyrics. It sounds like the singer is gargling gravel. The music is good [for hardcore]; it flows well and makes you want to move around, but it's hard to tell what the singer's singing about. None of the tracks stand out, they all sound so similar that they bleed together. Nothing separates one song from another. Those into the hardcore scene already should find this record enjoyable. For those wanting an introduction to hardcore, I'd suggest starting somewhere else. **(Victory)** *Stefan Peterson.*

NO KNIFE Fire in the City of Automatons CD

This is one of those albums that's difficult to describe in a way that will lend it the most justice. Since '93, these guys have produced 3 full-lengths and a few 7"s, dropped a couple members and added new ones to create the chemistry for the **Fire in in the City of Automatons** release. No Knife's sound is familiar -- along the lines of a Fugazi / Karate / Sunny Day Real Estate graft—yet maintains an original, skillful style of their own. Uplifting guitar dominates most of the tracks with imaginative, experimental tones without being sickeningly dramatic. Every song lends itself to a certain mood, enabling intelligent, but not pretentious, lyrics to incorporate all the ups and downs. Undoubtedly, some songs are better than others, but because none are lacking in thought or talent, I'm rendered unable to choose a favorite. **(Time Bomb)** *Lizzie Cook.*

NOTHINGFACE An Audio Guide to Everyday Atrocity CD

At first, I didn't know what to make of the artwork on the cover of Nothingface's album. Once I listened to the CD, I encountered a wall of heaviness. Not as heavy as Embodiment, or even Dimmu Borgir, it's almost as if these guys are not as vicious as they could be. Maybe that's their intention. "Goldtooth" is pretty complicated in its riffing. "Grinning" sounds like I've heard it before. Maybe it's because I've played this CD once or twice before writing this. Even if I hadn't listened to it, I would still say the music sounds familiar, but in this song I see something disturbing: the singer goes from sounding like Max Cavalera to Paul Young! What's the deal? I hope they're not trying to cover too many bases a la Sacrifice Isaac and Loudmouth! "So Few" sounds a bit wimpy, and once the vocals come in, it's definitely wimpy. I'm hearing Paul Young again! What's the deal? "Villains" gets things grooving heavily again. "Sleeper", the title says it all. Almost made me fall asleep dreaming of a nightmare in which Paul Young was in my bedroom! I have to wake up! **[Mayhem]** *G. C.*

NOT REBECCA Twin City Obituary CD

Four guys from Chicago playing nice soft pop punk. This is their debut from 1995, and because I couldn't find any info on these guys, I can only assume that they've released something since then. I know they have some stuff out on Thick Recs that's pretty good; along the same lines as on **Twin City Obituary**. Sometimes the vocals resemble Evan Dando's [Lemonheads] and, occasionally, like Bryan Curry [Rugby Mothers]. This release is tight and catchy without being wimpy or overly emotional. Favorite tracks would have to be the slow dance song, "S.S.N." and "Distance Closing," their hardest-hitter. **(Johann's Face)** *Lizzie Cook.*

OBLIVION Suckers from the Start CD

This is a CD I've been waiting for, for a long time, and didn't even know it. Not much has come out recently that I've actually been excited about. This CD is an Oblivion "comp" featuring only Oblivion. In other words, it's a retrospective and collection of unreleased tunes. This [probably] has Oblivion's best songs on it. There are also incredible covers from Twisted Sister, Iron Maiden, Metallica, Devo, Van Halen and AC/DC. Don't worry, there are plenty of Oblivion's originals, as this CD has an amazing 26 songs on it. I recommend getting this immediately. Oh yeah, the last song is a Christmas song! ...Merry Christmas! **(Sinister)** *Eddie V. Migraine.*

OF MONTREAL The Gay Parade CD

of Montreal's second release is a psychedelic concept album about a character named "Claude Robert", written by Kevin Barnes in his bedroom. He's a member of the Athens, GA's Elephant 6 collective (including other creative pop eccentrics like Neutral Milk Hotel, Olivia Tremor Control, Elf Power and the Music Tapes) who've been making great low fidelity exploratory recordings in their homes on inexpensive 4- and 8-track machines, and lately, turning this work into albums, rich with new ideas. The concept for this album is a story about Kevin Barnes sitting around, depressed about his life and watching traffic speed by. In his mind, he slowed the traffic to the pace of a parade and imagined each car as a float. He then created stories that would be acted out on each float. He enjoyed doing this so much, that, in the story, he changed his name to "Claude Robert." As Claude Robert, he "rediscovered the all-encompassing gaiety he felt before being born." To symbolize this, he named the parade he'd created the "Gay Parade." The music itself is a lot like Yellow Submarine-era Beatles, or Brian Wilson's more sing-song, childlike songs. Lots of piano, penny whistles, lap guitars, organs, cellos, a musical saw and strange analog effects, used in songs entitled: "A Collection of Poems About Water" and "A Man's Life Flashing Before His Eyes While He and His Wife Drive Off a Cliff into the Ocean." Many people think this kind of music is a form of escapism. I think it's great to escape in a way that doesn't keep you running away from reality, but rather brings the escape into reality, transforming every mundane thing in your life that drags you down into something new. **[Bar/None]** *Sam Rose.*

THE OLD JOE CLARKS Metal Shed Blues CD

One of the 3000 reasons I don't sing or play the blues in public is that somehow, no matter how into it I am, I take all the guts out of it. There's no grit there. I know how heart-breaking that is to admit. But for the sake of society I admit it. **(Checkered Past)** *Scott Joyner.*

ONE BAD APPLE Creeping Things CD

I believe I've read about One Bad Apple before. I think they were featured in one of Metal Maniacs demo sections before. Surprise! Allen Park also has metal! I'm wondering where Jason McCoy is at. What's up Jason! We never jammed! Remember me? Anyway, back to the Apple. The first song, "Some by Fear," is ok. I don't think the dual vocals sound very good, as they sound a bit clunky. The production's clean. I did notice there's no lead guitar on the first song. Could it be that no one knows how to play it? "Disarray" proves otherwise. I can hear some cool background guitar stuff. It's actually a pretty cool song. It's very heavy and fast! "Rent" starts slow and heavy, before getting faster, then slows back down! Cool! "Presence" is the necessary slow song. "Post Mortem Depression" reminds me a bit of Snoop Carmona's old band...what's their name?...I can't remember...Bob King played with them for about a month...Oh yeah, Laceration! The next song, "Wrath" takes too long getting going and the tempo is milder. "Hell's Half Acre" starts with dialogue from a movie or a soap opera, before the guitar and rhythm section kicks in Primus-style. Next! "Hazard Identity" returns to the heavy stuff. "Given Power" is also somewhat heavy. A tip guys: Stay heavy and stop the joke-Primus songs. Just one question: Who do you want to be compared to, Pantera or Primus? I rest my case. **[Kingdom]** *Gerry Cummings.*

DAVID ONLEY Through a Glass Darkly CD

I do a lot of kidding around in **ETCH** about effeminate male musicians. But truly, I can't see why being sensitive means getting cream-corn mushy. You can be sensitive yet strong [look at how many propositions Robert Redford has gotten]. Onley proves the point with this folk disc. His voice and arrangements are delicate, not weak. Some of the songs plod along, and a few lyrics are a bit hackneyed (nobody should use "*cuts like a knife*" ever again), but overall it's a pleasure to listen to a man who reveals himself without getting melodramatic. **(Philo)** *Scott Joyner.*

OPIE'S DREAM No More Time CD

This is one of those CDs that falls somewhere in that Bermuda triangle between candy-ass alternative, "adult contemporary" and crap you hear on NPR when it's not folk, reggae or the Brave New Waves Show. Like the airplanes that have been lost in the Triangle, this CD will certainly disappear into the nameless $1 CD bins in nameless, shameless record stores. Actually, it sounds a little like XTC (the band!) on a bad day, with really cheesy lyrics ("*Heaven knows, your kiss is ecstasy / Does that make us property / Do I own you, do you own me*"). Recorded in my hometown of Ferndale, Michigan, it's depressing to know they live amongst us. **[www.opiesdream.com]** *fike.*

ORGY Candyass CD

Well, I was hoping to like this CD. Unfortunately, the only song I like in here, is that re-make of an 80's song (or is it a 90's song?). For some reason, I thought these guys would be heavier than they are. As of now, I think they're a NIN or Ministry clone. **[Elementree / Reprise]** *Gerry Cummings.*

BETH ORTON Central Reservation CD

It's difficult for me to comprehend the monumental achievement of England's Beth Orton. 2 years ago, one EP and a full-length propelled Orton onto the stages of the major British summer music festivals, then into the studio to record with legendary Chicago folk-bluesman Terry Callier for a second EP. Her follow-up to the critically fawned over Trailer Park, **Central Reservation** is a breathtaking musical landscape; already this year's finest album. This is, quite frankly, a perfect piece of artwork. "Stolen Car" opens the album, and, driven by a lurching, hulking violin, explores familiar situations for Beth: "*You walked into my house last night / I couldn't help but notice / A life that was long gone / Still burning strong... And why should I know better by now / I'm old enough not to.*" The song falls off in an aggressive crescendo of a circling, wind-whipped string segment. "Sweetest Decline," the hidden gem of **Central Reservation**, is a bittersweet, dreamy ballad that almost seems too mature a composition for someone's 2nd proper album. It's a quaint café jazz exercise, where the notes of the piano swirl like a satin veil in an evening wind. Above the tinkling piano and guitar-plucking, Orton breathlessly sighs: "*What's the use in regrets / They're just things we haven't done yet / Now the day draws away / And my heart sinks with the sun / It's like catching snow on my tongue.*" "Couldn't Cause Me Harm" visits the realm of exquisite pop with its slow, frantic sexy twirl, while "Pass In Time" picks up where the Best Bit EP left off. Heavenly-voiced bluesman, Terry Callier, trades harmonies with Beth in his inspirational and tender 7-minute plus magna opus. Although Orton's music is rooted in folk / soul / pop, she's nonetheless cultivated the underpinnings of a new progressive sound, one which combines the aforementioned genres with dance / trip-hop. Nowhere is that better displayed than on the title track's remix (mixed by Ben Watt [Everything But The Girl]). "Central Reservation" contains one of the sexiest lyrics ever, as Orton muses over events of the previous evening: "*And I can still smell you on my fingers / And taste you on my breath.*" Ooooohhhh the humanity. "Feel To Believe" ends the album properly (before the title-track remix) and it's an appropriate final statement. Orton's songs are mature in that they always avoid clichés and never stray into the world of sappy-romantic drivel. The voice is always independent, and realizes problems in a relationship are caused by the people involved. Orton won't sacrifice herself unconditionally for some romantic ideal of love and here it's no different. Her impassioned, naked voice pleads with a desperate person to pull him [or her] self from the torturous depths of hell: "*And I can't watch you waste away / But I won't beg you still to say.*" Orton has created a new direction for pop music with her ingenious melding of folk / pop and dance rhythms, but, as **Central Reservation** brilliantly shows, it's her deep, developed lyrics, delivered in her passionate, yet authoritative voice, that is her allure. This is the kind of record that announces enormous staying power from the first to final note. **(Arista)** *Bob Toole*

OUT IN WORSHIP Sterilized CD

A bloody pig on the cover? Hmm!!!! The first "song" starts with a bunch of crap! I'm tired of bands using and abusing weird intros / samples. I don't know what to call them! This isn't music. I just realized that this is a 5-song CD! Well, skip the first, "Sterilized." It's boring. "Nut" begins in much the same boring, weird way. "Shift" is a detour to hell. Wait! It's actually a bit creepy. Maybe for a weird "lost soul" type of movie. "Jam Jar Superstar" is obviously dedicated to Air Jordan, right? I won't discuss it. No more millions for you Michael! The fifth / final song is called "Navajos" and it's trippy. Unfortunately, I don't smoke pot or do drugs, so it does nothing for me. It's a bit reminiscent of Pink Floyd -- I've never really cared for Floyd. Yes, go ahead and attack me. I don't like Floyd. I also don't care for Out in Worship. **[Perishable]** *Gerry Cummings.*

OVERKILL Necroshine CD

This is absolute metal perfection. The best heavy metal record since Danzig's first, Slayer's Reign In Blood or Anthrax's Among the Living. Hell, this is better than *all* of them. That may sound like a lot of puffery, but it's an absolutely demonstrable fact. This CD rules, here are a few reasons: **Necroshine** starts spitting and sputtering until working its locomotive breath into a rich foamy lather. It churns for precisely the right amount of time needed to prepare the listener for a sadistically brutal thrashing about the ears. Be warned, weaker spines will be snapped! Bobby "Blitz" Ellsworth must've gargled with battery acid to get the vocal effect for the screams contained here. "Let Us Prey" has a heavy blues feel that is so in tune with what Satan would want to hear, that he should've been given co-credit for its composition; it's evil with a capital "E." Like the song says, "*He* *had death leaking from his eyes...*", some of those tears must've been captured on tape for this to sound as it does. "80 Cycles" is the best of the best of Overkill. Every ounce a killer, waiting to be unleashed upon the world. Ellsworth moves between soft and harsh sides with schizophrenic ease. Flawless and lethal in every way imaginable. The guitar, well, let's say they're on a first name basis with the average chainsaw, it's sure to be a classic. I wouldn't mind if they did a 40-minute version of it when they hit town. "Stone Cold Jesus" won't get much airplay on Family Life Radio, but you should be most willing to be bounced about by its "nail-in-the-palm" rhythms and "halo-of-thorns" lyrics. Overkill has spent, roughly, the last decade living in the shadow of the bands mentioned above. They've put out great albums, but nothing that's threatened to steal the thunder from the aforementioned groups. Now we have **Necroshine**, snorting and convulsing in ways no metal fan would ever think to resist. This is fist-pumping, head-banging, mosh-pitting music like it's never, *ever* been done before. My God, this is good! **[CMC International]** *David Lee.*

PAPA VEGAS Hello Vertigo CD

This band is another pop / alternative band. "Something Wrong" was kind of moody, but showed some promise. Then "Bombshell" drops and it disappoints. "Super Telepathy" is more disappointing. "Mesmerized" is even slower. I stopped caring. "Long Days" is heavier. It sounds like The Cure-meets-The Cranberries. Actually, it sounds like I've heard it before. Have I? Have I heard it on the radio? "Reason Without Meaning" starts slower -- boring. "No Destination" is next and shows that these guys could have made extra-catchy pop songs, but they wasted the opportunity. **[BMG]** *Gerry Cummings.*

PARIS COMBO s/t CD

From the moment you pop in Paris Combo, the atmosphere in the room is transformed into an upscale Paris night club, and you have this electrifying jazz band entertaining you for a little over an hour. The instrumentation is excellent. The styles include: Dixieland Jazz, Gypsy, Middle-Eastern, Marimba, Italian and a number I don't recognize. All of the singing is in French and it's very sexy, making this a great "make-out disc." The horns are enormous and the guitar-playing is a mix of Django Reinhardt, Stan Getz, and Charlie Christian. The drummer and bass player form a very solid rhythm section. My suggestion, if you like jazz pick this up. **[Tinder]** *S L.*

PERVIS Cleansed by Fire CD

Is this the twin version of Primus? Or is this Rush II? Is the singer Geddy Lee? Holy crap Batman! I don't know if I'll be able to stand much more of this! First, I've never liked Rush. Never! 2nd, anyone imitating Geddy Lee gets my immediate thumbs down. But wait! I've just noticed that it's a *girl* singing, not some guy doing a gay imitation of Geddy! Well, if that's the case, song one is fairly substandard. Song 2 is some type of pseudo-noise punk thing. By now you might be wondering, "Why is he saying 'song one', etc.?" Well, it's hard to tell from the CD what the names of the songs are! I think the 3rd song, which is ok, is called "Bloody Nipple" (my vote for this year's stupidest song title). By the 4th song, "Kites Cost Money" [is that the title?], I realize that they aren't gonna sing anything that is life changing. Just a bunch of stupid lyrics. If you want more proof, here's the clincher: "Rotten Tuna." You want more? **[Idol]** *G. C.*

ROD PIAZZA & THE MIGHTY FLYERS Here & Now CD

Piazza is a harmonica player from way back, and there should be every reason to anticipate something good from this CD. It's not bad, but somehow smooth harp music doesn't sit right. There's something missing, the tunes go along harmlessly without any kick. **(Tone-Cool)** *Scott Joyner.*

PINHEAD GUNPOWDER Shoot the Moon CD

More Hüsker Dü than Green Day on this, the 4th release by this East Bay super group (which is odd considering Billie Joe sings on every track). A more "mature pop-punk" for the kids in its cohesiveness, at least compared to the last 3 records. Cleaner production, better lyrics, no metal guitar and a cover that isn't soft rock for a change, as well as the great packaging you've come to expect from Aaron Cometbus (who also happens to drum for this band). I didn't think it was possible, but I like this way better than the last CD and about as much as the first one. Great! **[Adeline]** *E. Emmitt.*

THE PORTERS s/t CS

One of my friends gave me this saying, "You've got to review this, you'll dig it," then proceeds to mention how the band has ex-members of both the Parka Kings and Telegraph. "Great," I'm thinking, "Another crappy ska album, with some well-placed horn lines in a vague attempt to be a swing band." But holy mackerel bat-dudes, I was wrong. 8, count 'em, 8 crackers from the 'burbs playing 50's / 60's soul music. And not that bad, bar, white boy funk shite either, these gents pump out the genuine article. Ok, maybe it's a lil' watered-down with a dash of rocksteady [music makes strange bedfellows], but this works together. It's only a 2-song demo, but both tunes will have you wanting to gyrate in strange and sinful ways, my dear friends. Not sure where to pick this up, prolly their live shows, but you'd want to check them out anyhow. Rumor has it that one of this very fine magazine's writers, one who loves ska even more than me, plays in them, but I've not confirmed this. If you can find it you'll like it. *Paul Hahn.*

POTSHOT Rok 'n' Roll CD

Pretty good ska from Japan. Punky, with fast, phat horns and a pop sensibility that gives it the added kick to help it stand out from all the crappy ska-punk out there. This is familiar territory, but Potshot pulls it off rather well. Some of their old(er) stuff I've heard is a little more hyper punk sounding, and worth investigating too. **(Asian Man)** *fike.*

PRESSURE POINT Cross To Bear CD

The second release from this Sacramento street punk band follows up, in true fashion, with its gruff skinhead anthems. Not a huge departure from the genre, but that's not really the point is it? Just solid, tight playing with poppy Sham 69 style guitar work with more of a "punk-than-rock" feel to it that most Oi bands can't seem to deliver. Contenders right up there with The Templars and The Dropkick Murphys as one of the best bands in street punk today. **[GMM]** *E. E.*

PROLAPSE Ghosts of Dead Airplanes CD

Most bands are "followers." They get "their sound" by following in the footsteps of their favorite bands, almost aping those bands by using the same effects, the same vocal intonation, etc. Remember all of the Seattle bands in the early '90s? And what about all of the bands that copied them? A more current example is the pop-punk explosion and the bands from across the US that emulate the "SoCal sound," even if they're from Podunk, WV. 99.9% of those bands are boring, because they aren't creating anything new or of substance; just variations of the same theme. However, every year **ETCH** will get a couple tapes, CDs or vinyl bucking the trend, creating extremely original, unique music, that far-and-away outstrips other bands. This 8-song CD, **Ghosts of Dead Aeroplanes**, from England's Prolapse, fits that definition to a "t." Exceedingly original, the band must've been influenced by scads of bands. The music itself is a bit on the quirkier side, with different types of pop music melded together to give us a musical stew that's exceedingly different and creative from most of the indie pop that loyal aficionados seem very keen on; lapping it up like mother's milk. The closest band that I can think of that comes close to Prolapse, is The Fall; except vocally, 'cause no one can match Mark E. Smith's vox. None of the 8 songs are filler, all are above average and higher. You'll enjoy this one, it ranks up there as one of the best of 1999. **[Jetset]** *N. Zebrowski.*

PUSHOVER s/t CD

These guys, pushed along by Less Than Jake and other hipsters, have tons of good hooks and chops, but seem to be stuck playing yuppie ska. It's rocky and it's ska-y, but it ends up sounding plain. There may be great things to come from these gents, but they ain't broke outta the shell yet. **(Pork-N-Beans)** *fike.*

THE QUEERS Later Days and Better Lays CD

With Lookout Records releasing a compilation of demo material that's all been previously released, it's pretty obvious that the Queers are trying to milk their popularity as much as they can. Most of these song would make up their legendary "Love Songs For The Retarded," but there are a few odds and ends to be found that have never been released on CD before. The snotty, 12-year old Ramones' mentality is still there, but the sound quality and production isn't; they are demos after all. One is better off just buying "Love Songs...," but if you're a dedicated fan, add "Later Days and Better Lays" to the collection. **(Lookout!)** *Demangis.*

THE RANKINS Uprooted CD

I have to say up front that I'm not a fan of the operatic female folk voice. Give me the grit of Lucinda Williams, the warmth of Emmylou Harris or the passion of Iris Dement over Joan Baez any day. Unfortunately, the 3 Rankin women favor the operatic style. This CD of folk and Celtic-influenced songs is impeccably played and arranged, and features guest appearances by Jerry Douglas, Sam Bush and John Jennings, but has the sterile, hollow feel that comes from over production. It sounds like someone vacuumed the soul out of the Rankins. The lyrics speak of heartbreak and loss, but there are so many layers between the listener and the feelings, the emotion seems plastic and distant. People have called this a "mature" record; and I guess they're right. Not one drop of sentiment overflows: no one's voice cracks with despair or giggles with joy. If this is growing up, send me back to kindergarten. **[Rounder]** *Jamie DePolo.*

THE RECEIVERS Words & Terms CD

These 4 West Coast boys provide the listener with an over-produced, cheesy, bar-crowd sound, with some hard-driving guitar that, according to other reviews, has recently been heralded as one of the most amazing bands coming out of the Bay Area lately. The thought kind of makes me shudder - poor Bay Area! "Ted Riviera," is unquestionably the best track, with a break from the usual clear-as-a-bell vocals and an attempt to be much harder than expressed throughout the rest of the LP. Stated plainly at the beginning of track four, "*We're gonna plug in, we'll go crazy*," is a prime example of their lyrical shortcomings at work. **[Wingnut]** *Lizzie Cook.*

RED SEPTEMBER This Is Life CS

This should be called "This Is Crap." This is way too friendly. There's no picture of the band in the tape, but you can tell by the music that if you were to look in the dictionary under "whitie," there'd be a picture of, at least, one of these guys. I'll bet you anything they're all in their late-30's and 40's. Generic. **(Static)** *Chad Overdose.*

RED STAR BELGRADE The Fractured Hymnal CD

Bill and Graham Curry, the principals of Red Star Belgrade, are deeply unhappy people. Not in the sighing, sad way of disappointed partners, but in the bitter, angry, loud way of someone whose life sucks and is smart enough to know it doesn't have to be that way. Junkies, suicidal divorcees, drunks and distraught, dumped lovers are a few of the characters populating this record. The vocals have a Neil Young off-kilterness to them and the music is a cross between the soundtrack to the darkest Appalachian myth and Buffalo Tom circa "Birdbrain." One of my favorite new releases. **[Checkered Past]** *Jamie DePolo.*

REGGIE & THE FULL EFFECT Greatest Hits '84-'87 CD

It doesn't matter that every song sounds the same. It doesn't matter that the word "run away" is found on practically every track. And it doesn't matter that Reggie and the Full Effect are merely a couple of guys from the Get Up Kids and Coalesce messing around. Hands down, this is the most fun release to ever come out of Kansas City, MO. Imagine if Weezer grew up listening to Youth Of Today and Sick Of It All, with 80's new-wave pop mixed in. Lots of heavy guitar and drums, along with Moog keyboards and poppy vocals overlapping more poppy vocals. A nice break from all the tough guy seriousness and testosterone surrounding 90's hardcore. **(Second Nature)** *Demangis.*

THE RENTALS Seven More Minutes CD

The Rentals have given us more radio-friendly pop music with **Seven More Minutes**, their first album for Madonna's "pseudo-indie" label, Maverick. This time, Matt Sharp [Weezer] and Petra Haden [That Dog] enlisted the vocal styling of Blur's frontman Damon Albarn on one track. Believe me you, that track, "Big Daddy C.", is the only one worth listening to. Everything else is a straight-up, overproduced, less interesting continuation of their self-titled first release, yielding synthesized sappy harmonizing with bubblegum lyrics. **Seven More Minutes** isn't terrible, but it's not mind-blowing either. As with the new Star Wars movie, I might have gone in with high expectations just to be disappointed. **(Maverick)** *R. O.*

RETIRE s/t CS

Slightly out-of-kilter indie pop from this terribly underrated East Lansing combo. I suppose that if you listen hard enough you'll hear traces of Pavement and others of that ilk, but these gentlemen have an original sound and are extremely talented, especially as songwriters. Top quality material from the Capitol City area. Should the opportunity arise, check 'em out. *N .Zebrowski.*

KYLE RHODES This Tiresome Fate CD

I'm betting every town in the United States has a performer like Kyle Rhodes (Austin and Nashville probably have 100s). Good, solid singer / songwriters who play every week at a local coffeehouse or bar and whose work chronicles familiar incidents and emotions in somewhat novel ways. They're talented, have a local fan base and even have done a dance or 2 with a couple records label reps who expressed interest. But they've never quite made it to the big leagues. Maybe they became disgusted with the music industry or didn't want to sing someone else's songs or wear someone else's clothes. But they haven't given up the dream -- they keep writing and performing. And some of them manage to hook up with labels like Permanent and put out releases of quiet beauty. For that I'm glad. **[Permanent]** *Jamie DePolo.*

STEVE ROACH & VIR UNIS Body Electric CD

Prominent electronic / ethno-ambient music pioneer Steve Roach teems up with the equally-talented ambient superstar, Vir Unis, to create this masterpiece that utilizes many different cultural and ethnic-oriented styles of music. It's as daring and original in sound and performance as it is conceptually. Two premier musicians combine to give us music that is both musically satisfying as it is challenging, intellectually. Unique and outstanding, **Body Electric** will leave you wanting more. **[Projekt]** *N. Zebrowski.*

RUNFORYERLIFE s/t CD

Like a baby Isaac Green & the Skalars, this release has great female vocals and a slightly overzealous crew cranking out the super-pop-ska, and I have no problem with that. This is definitely the best Jump Up! release I've heard in a while. Good stuff, bordering on fusion, yet still skanky enough for the kids. Young ska with a slight Beastie Boys influence that's totally listenable and even catchier. I'm glad I heard this despite the religious leanings. **[Jump Up!]** *E. Emmitt.*

RUTH'S HAT I Don't Wanna Fall in Love CD

Power-Poptopia, dudes! The songs: "Baywatch Nights," Dream Lover," "Feedback" and the title track are more pop [thankfully] than pop-punk. The "Dream Lover" cover aside, the songs seem to be rooted in 50's doo-wop. In a past issue, one of our writers said that RH were "ska-punk." I can't say for certain, but I think his noggin was up his keester when he listened to a previous 7". Above average poptones for all of you with a penchant for pop. **[SPG]** *N. Zebrowski.*

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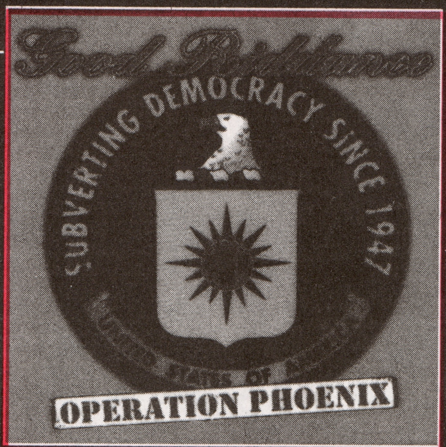
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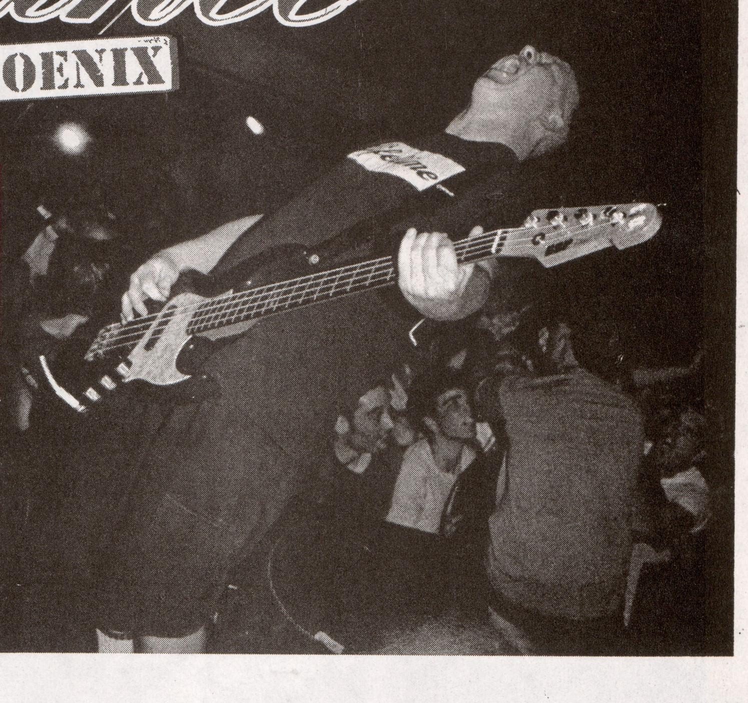

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WRECK CHORDS

RUTH'S HAT Too Much Box 7"

I reviewed this for my own 'zine a couple issues back. I think that I like it a bit better this time around, but I'd still prefer less friendly vocals and the guitar to be a bit louder. Basically, it's 5 friendly punk songs, if you know what I mean. **(Spank)** *Chad.*

SACRIFICE ISAAC Migraine CD

Well, well, well. What do we have here? Another wimp metal band? Or are they even *supposed* to be metal? I don't know. I do know there are far too many bands like Sacrifice Isaac. They want to sound heavy, but instead sound wimpy. An alternative band! Or are they a wimpy alternative band trying to sound heavy? I have no idea. I do know these guys sound like Soundgarden, Red Square Black, etc. If you want more proof that I don't know what these guys are [maybe they don't either], listen to the songs "Figure It Out" and "Disadvantage", which both start with cheesy alternative guitar intros. Boring! **[Slip Disc]** *Gerry Cummings.*

SAND ON STARS Songs From Silt CD

This CD has been a pleasant surprise. Indie pop along the same lines as most of Shimmy Disc's late 1980s back catalogue [a very good thing, I might add]. **Songs From Silt** is the brainchild of Jeff MacLeod, the one-man gang behind Sand On Stars. Keyboard-led, quirky, lo-fi and extremely endearing music that far outstrips most of the other bands in that particular genre. It's amazing that a CD this good can be the result of a person with a slew of keyboards and other assorted instruments, as well as having the time to create this CD. Two of the best songs on this album are: "I Think it was Rome" and "Margaret is in Cincinnati." Kudos to Twist Top Recs for this beaut. **[Twist Top]** *N. Zebrowski.*

SCREECHING WEASEL Emo CD

Ben Weasel's seemingly getting more and more bitter, you can read it in his Hitlist columns and his lyrics. Nevertheless, it's not hurting Screeching Weasel one bit. Couple this release with the stuff on the Four on the Floor comp, and you'll find some of the most anthemic SW vitriol since maybe Wiggle or My Brain Hurts. It's hard to believe the Riverdales even existed after listening to this. Gone are the straight Ramones references, this is just high-powered pop with the trademark nasal vocals. I never thought I'd say this but even with the Cranberries cover this blows everything they've done in the past 5 or 6 years -- some of which I really love -- out of the water completely. If you don't like this you're either stupid or lying. **[Panic Button]** *E. E.*

THE SECRETIONS We Secrete - You Suck 7"

Sloppy street punk from Sacramento, the lyrics are funny and borderline stupid. That's why I love it! This 7" comes with a booklet containing the entire history of the band. Mickey Rat, bassist / screamer extrordinaire, accounts the ridiculous story. It's a complete wonder that this band survived 6 months! They're the band that tops Spinal Tap's mishaps! It's worth getting if you can find it. **(Drool City)** *Eddie Van Migraine.*

SELFMINDED s/t CD

Just looking at the picture I am getting chills already! Another alternative band. As the first song starts ("Between Two"), I hear the clichéd alterna-music, but then it gets faster! It's not heavy, but it kind of is. The vocals sound a bit out of place. The next song "Clean" sounds a bit heavier. Like a wimpier Pantera. A very wimpier Pantera! "Three" is a would-be-heavy-song. "The Second Beginning" is definitely alterna-sounding, but then the vocals come in screeching, and then it gets faster! I give up! Are these guys a grungy band or a heavy or punk band? Next! **[Solid State]** *G. Cummings.*

THE SEWERGROOVES Three Time Losers CD

Not your typical lo-fi punk, the Sewergrooves add a splash of metal for flavor. The effect is nice, but tends to make some of the songs sound really similar after awhile. The style reminds me a lot of D-Generation or Teengenerate, except played faster and meaner. The standout song is probably "Could've Been Dead," which I had on repeat for about 20 minutes on my CD player the first time I heard it. I'd recommend this to lo-fi fans or metal fans curious about lo-fi. Good stuff. **[Estrus]** *Karp.*

SILVERCHAIR Neon Ballroom CD

Wowee, Silverchair collaborates with David Helfgott, the guy the movie *Shine* was based on. So what, it's all in vain on this overwrought, overproduced desperate attempt to push these little pricks on the mall crowd, which, come to think of it, will probably work. One middling track on this disc, "Anthem For The Year 2000," the rest is very flushable. **[Epic]** *D. Wood.*

SIMPLY KUNG FU Hoo Flung Du CD

I find it amazing, that you can hear a SoCal band and know they're from there. That is unless you're *from* SoCal, then your band doesn't sound like any other band. Whatever, dude! Simply Kung Fu is from the LA-area and sound like a SoCal band. Having said that, they don't sound like a rehashed, washed out NOFX clone. (I know NOFX isn't from SoCal, but all the bands from SoCal try to sound like 'em, so back off!) Kung Fu is an energetic, new school skate-punk band. Most of their songs are fast and have lots o' metal chugga-chugga guitars. What separates them from other bands is the guitar playing. It's way more interesting than the bulk of bands from California. **(Rump Roast)** *Eddie Van Migraine.*

SISTER FRICTION Glamour…My Ass! CD

You know those "Hits of the '80s" CDs you buy and there are songs that you completely skip over every time you put on the disc? Well, imagine an entire CD of bad 80's drum machine keyboard dance garbage. The singer sounds like he's trying to be a Pet Shop Boy. Does that tell you anything? **(Incidental)** *Eddie Van Migraine.*

SKINNY The Weekend CD

Skinny's **The Weekend** is a unique album from 2 London guys that manage to mix a lot of today's popular musical genres into the slacker album for the new millennium. **The Weekend**'s 12 tracks paint a picture, from Friday's final sigh, to the out of bounds party on Saturday and, finally, the gut-wrenching comedown on Sunday. The tracks that revolve around **The Weekend** range from the somber, lazy twang of "The Bus Song," to the exhilarating house mix of "Friday Night Parts 1 & 2." Paul Herman's vocals are a shiftless English drawl, with a touch of soul that just keeps it from dragging. The music itself ranges from Beck's loser pop, to full-on electronica with bits of drum and bass. It's that variety that separates Skinny from the heap of one dimensional artists that keep cropping up. The letdown of **The Weekend** is that it's a bit sparse, the songs that are good are great, and the songs that aren't, really blow. So, here's the skinny on Skinny (I couldn't wait to do that), a good debut, but hopefully there are better things to come. **(PGD / Polygram)** *M. P.*

SKUNK ANANSIE Charlie Big Potato CD

My first impression of this band came from the lead singer's beautiful haunting voice. Her voice is backed by an extremely powerful band. The more I listened to this, the more I liked it. Though there are only 3 songs on this release, they definitely showed off the diversity of their music abilities. **(Virgin)** *M. Milonas.*

RYAN SMITH & THE MELISMATICS s/t CD

This debut from these chumpy Minnesota lads is rife with the comatose ghosts of all that was downright crappy with the '80s. It's nothing but angst-ridden crap about boys-n-girls, bad love and Aldo Nova-like guitars. Check out these lyrics from "Look Around," the opening track: *"Mother father don't see who I am / Sister brother do the best that they can / Another day we might see things the same / Another way to deal with the pain."* God, irritate my privates with the bad end of a cattle prod, would ya? Deeper into this quagmire of 5th-grade musings, is this gem: *"Well I want to work things out / Do we need to scream and shout? / You sat through all kinds of weather / You'll always be my girl in leather,"* followed by some zany scratching on the geee-tar! Whoa! Look out! Bury this in the back yard next to the dear old family pooch. **[High Tension]** *Bob Toole.*

SOAK Flywatt CD

Swaggering into your virtual reality, with bulging biceps and more pieced body parts than I care to contemplate, these melodramatic techno-funksters had damn well better deliver the visceral goods even to qualify as a guilty pleasure. Okay, I'll admit it, I caught myself playing air-guitar to the heavy riff on the opening number [there's no downplaying the significance of that sort of spontaneous kinetic reaction]. The rest of the album is in-your-face in a manner reminiscent of "Poochie the Dog" on that already-classic *Simpson's'* episode. Synths or no synths, this is a pop-metal group at heart, and no more capable than Def Leppard in differentiating between the exciting and the merely obnoxious. Regarding both the band name and the album title: I know rock has been around for 45 years now, but has it really come to this? **(Sire)** *Doug Hamilton*

SODA ASH Sci-Fi Lullaby CD

Unexpected lil' slab. The music is fusion of rock-noise-dirge, with a hint of goth tossed in for all the high schoolers who like to dress silly. They are simple, but the stories they tell are compelling; in the case of song three, "Shane How Some Girls Stray", is down right chilling. Hopefully, they'll hit the bricks soon and share their wealth. **[Graffenberg** c/o SodaAsh@SciFiLullaby.com**]** *N. Zebrowski.*

SOIL Throttle Junkie CD

Further proof that butt-metal is dead. **(MIA)** *Demangis.*

SOLARIZED Neanderthal Speedway CD

High energy, groove-laden, rock and roll that reminds me of Kyuss and the Stooges. The music bounces along at the right pace and the lyrics, while they're a little underdeveloped, aren't insultingly slight. This would be great cruisin' rock, which there isn't nearly enough of these days. This is a great disc to slip between Powertrip and Sky Valley. Recommended. **[Man's Ruin]** *Eric Reanimator.*

SOMBER Kill the Trend CS

Somber rips out serious hardcore / grindcore. The vocalist vents with grunted growls and constipated cries. With songs like: "Betrayed" and "The Pain That Never Dies," you can almost feel the anger coming to a boil. The excellent drumming tops off this 5-songer and may leave you exhausted. Hey, not a bad review from a guy who doesn't dig this type of music. *Chad.*

SONIA DADA My Secret Life CD

Sonia Dada is not some sorority girl, it's a band. Hailing from Chicago, this 8-piece jam band is on their way up the charts with the single "Zachary." This song is on their new album, **My Secret Life** which ranges from funk, country, rock to gospel, blues and soul. This is Sonia Dada's debut, after scoring 80% of the music for the soundtrack of Barry Berman's independent movie *Waterproof.* Dan Pritzker, the band's primary songwriter and guitarist, is also a self-proclaimed "deadhead." "We do most of our recording live," Pritzker said. I think that explains the "jam band feel" of the album. Pritzker also was involved in the production end, along with Barry Beckett (Dylan, P. Simon, Phish, et. al.). **[Capricorn]** *Scott Laakso.*

THE SOVINES Truckers Welcome CD

I swear, frontman Bob Starker looks more and more like Johnny Cash every time I see him. The picture of Bob on the CD sleeve is very apropos. The last time I was talking to Bob (at Mac's Bar), he laughed so hard he fell backwards in his chair! What a great band! These fellas know how to have fun! Wherever you go, whatever you drink, take The Sovines with you. **(Kingpin)** *Ken Knott.*

SPAHN RANCH Beat Noir CD

I won't go as far as calling this memorable or anything like that, but it's a fully competent, functional techno-dance product; comfortable to the body and displaying an understanding of the melodic applications of LFO. It's even rather evocative, though I'd be hard-pressed to put my finger on what it evokes. High-tech dislocation / detachment / alienation maybe? Or, given the rather Gothic styling of the singer, maybe the 80's club scene? After all, Depeche Mode also sounded pretty "noir" in their day. **(Cleopatra)** *Doug Hamilton.*

SPEEDBALL Get Up 'N Go! CD

The boys are back in town! If you've been to a recent Speedball gig, few and far between of late, more then likely you've heard all of these tunes, as they've been playing a couple of them for 2 years or better, if memory serves. However, for those of you that don't know them, try listening to 89X's PM drive time. You know, the time when you're leaving work, rumor has it that Kelly Brown has been playing "Team Blowout." And a blowout it is, from the opening chug of "Team Blowout," until the hammer comes down on this 4-songer, be prepared for a good ol' Detroit-flavored ass-whupping. "Team Blowout" and "Murder Car" are the fast-paced, aggressive music Speedball has been dishing out since they started. "Get Up 'N Go!" sounds amazing with its new intro, the 2 guitars contrasting beautifully. It no longer sounds like numerous other bands. It's fast SxDx-style punk. "Vertigo" is an old-fashioned punk number, much like "Boffo Socko." More proof that this band ain't dead yet. Also there's a very cool extra if you buy it. But c'mon now, any band that Lemmy has requested numerous times doesn't require me to tell you what to do. Look for the full length, Gashole, sometime towards late-summer. **(Mingya)** *P. Hahn.*

THE SPELLS The Age of Backwards 7"

Only being a 2-piece band, one of them being Carrie Brownstein from Sleater-Kinney fame, The Spells deliver this haunting, lo-fi drum and guitar pop with **The Age of Backwards**. Not that this hasn't been done before, with bands like the Bratmobile and Heavens to Betsy, but it further proves that bands can still pull it off by stripping away all the fancy productions, high tech recording equipment or even the accompaniment of a bass guitar. As mentioned before, just drums, guitar and Carrie's soothing, but equally chilling voice. As a bonus they tried The Who's "Can't Explain," which is kept in rhythm by authentic handicapping. **(K)** *Demangis.*

SPONGE New Pop Sunday CD

Here's a case where even though Sponge has come up with their best outing yet, I'm not sure that it matters. Sales figures for this record, which was released several months ago, are dismal to say the least. Barely registering a blip at the cash register is bad enough, but alternative radio has yet to embrace this record and that's a shame because, as I mentioned, this is their best offering to date. More mature and less dependent on clichéd themes and obsessions with Molly Ringwald and transvestites, **New Pop Sunday** is a genuine treat, layered in harmonies thick as honey. Singer Vinnie Dombrowski's voice has developed its own trademark raspy quality that I'm sure makes panties moist from coast to coast; similarities to Mike Ness' pipes are unavoidable, though. Must be they smoke the same brand o' filterless cigarettes. Sponge is desperately seeking the audience they found a couple of years back, standing there all sullen and forlorn asking themselves, *"Where you be?"* Nobody knows. **[Beyond / BMG]** *D. Wood.*

STRIKING IRWIN The 12 Step Program 7"

A-side: "The Demystification of Rock" -- short, sweet aggro that falls somewhere between the Jesus Lizard and early AmRep releases. Also on the a-side is the mind-blowing song [both musically and lyrically], "The Man Who Knows All Language." Neither song is for the weak at heart or those short on gray matter. *B-side*: "Transvestite Hangnail," features humorous lyrics that will probably be lost on the feeble-minded as well. The music has a heavier dose of JL; slower and in more of a groove. Spastic guitar work throughout. [c/o **Striking Irwin**] *N. Zebrowski.*

SUN RA Outer Space Employment Agency CD

Man…Or Astroman? claim that, like them, Sun Ra is also from outer space. I'm inclined to agree. This CD is a live re-release from the

Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz festival in 1973. By this time, Sun Ra's "Intergalactic Arkestra" had already been around for some 20 years. Freedom of expression and improvisation is the name of the game on this recording. A must for all hardcore jazz fans and experimental freaks. Even though Sun Ra is no longer on this planet, it is exciting to know that record labels like Alive! / Total Energy will keep his music in our midst. **(Alive! / Total Energy)** *Ken Knott.*

SUPERKREME s/t CD

Wow! I dig this! Kind o' like Mathew Sweet with more testosterone. The production is awesome. It sounds like a rock record is supposed to [when you think "rock record."] The songwriting is kickin' my rear. This sounds like 80's post new wave combined with a little bit of 60's psychedelia and a thick wall of heavy guitars. The melodies are extremely strong and hooky. Too bad college rock isn't more in this vein, 'cause then it'd be not only tolerable, but really cool! **(ACME Entertainment, Inc.)** *Eddie V Migraine.*

SWELL MAPS International Rescue CD

Unappreciated, seminal English garage / punk / new wave / underground band [featuring Nikki Sudden and Epic Soundtracks], from the late '70s ['77 through '79]. The music on this CD is a compilation of material made up of tracks that were originally released in the UK as a single, previously unreleased, never released on CD and / or unreleased mixes, with all tracks digitally re-mastered. Regardless of who, when or why, ALL of the songs on this 19-track CD are great. Snotty, garagy, lo-fi, p-rock that'll leave you smilin' for hours-on-end. Wonderfully refreshing music in this age of pre-packaged / corporate punk. Plus, it's a good history lesson for those of you curious about the music from the "first wave." Get it. **[Alive / Total Energy]** *N. Zebrowski.*

SYMPOSIUM On The Outside CD

I got a note attached to this CD that said "Like Supergrass?" I was instantly geeked, I love Supergrass, man! Plus it's on the Red Ant label, I love Red Ant, man! Then I played the CD and some things came to mind: It slightly resembles Supergrass's energy level, but the songs are another matter. Are they English-sounding Americans or vice-versa? Are they pretty boys? If not, how are they gonna get on the cover of *CMJ*? Overall, these songs are best suited for certain moments on "Friends" or "Dawson's Creek." Other than that, I'll forget this CD in less than an hour. But, hey, Red Ant! You're a great label, keep sending more. **[Red Ant]** *Bryan Ramirez.*

TERRA FIRMA s/t CD

I just read about Terra Firma in the latest *Metal Maniacs.* These guys obviously grew up listening to Black Sabbath, and the doom band with Lee Dorrian. This stuff is pure stoner rock. Not really heavy. "Rainbow Ride," "Goatburn" and "Good Stuff" show the band at its weakest (I think); they don't sound metal, just rock. "And the 8th Seal Was Hers" sounds heavier than the 3 previous songs, but it's still not as heavy as Sabbath. "Separate Graves" is a weird little ditty, almost a throwback to England in which the mighty Wallace gave trouble. Maybe it's meant as some type of memorial or something. Both "Spiral Guru" and "Fifth Wheel" start a bit heavy. These 2 songs might be cool live. "Nimbus" is a bit of a mess. "Troll Formula" shows what this band could be! For the first time, I hear cool dual guitar harmonies! Why not use more?! I can never get enough of a good thing! That's what's lacking from Terra Firma: the conviction to make all of their songs killer! **[5th Wheel / TMC]** *Gerry Cummings.*

THE TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE Search for Omega Minus CD EP
THE TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE Supreme Radial CD

One of the biggest dumb-assed moves this decade, was when Ol' Bob Pollard 86'd Tobin Sprout, Kevin Fennell and Mitch Mitchell from Guided By Voices. Just dumb to kill perfect chemistry. And Mah Earwig wasn't that impressive in the aftermath. Anyway, Tobin's doing solo stuff and one of rock's greatest guitarists, Mitch Mitchell, just-so-happens to have a cool little unit going on called The Terrifying Experience. I heard nothing until I tapped onto the GBV Website and found out about it. The CD EP (with the best title of the '90s) offers a lo-fi jaunt that's more rigid and somewhat comparable to GBV but more punk. I mean *real* punk. The EP seems like a splash of ideas, a couple of cases of brew, maybe a few all-nighters and a return back to the basement because of its "comfort." I love the EP, sounds like a comp, 'cause it shows the band's diversity. No one does that. **Supreme Radial** is a full-length studio romp and brings out Mitchell's roots of Midwestern punk rock. Totally catchy riffs from '78 / '79 Dangerhouse snotty stuff, completely passing up what the kids of today are hung up on. Perfect, we need that. T.E.X. is stripped-down and sounds very analog, without much in terms of overdubbing. No point in overcrowding for flash, but most importantly, getting that good guitar sound. This is the punk rock I dig, you can hear the buzz from the amps, you can feel the beer buzz. Keep it up, Mitch! You got something real cool going on. **(AAJ)** *Bryan Ramirez.*

TEX SVENGALI Adonai Elohim El Camino CD

I can't figure out where these guys are coming from. One minute they sound like Black Flag and the next like ZZ Top! I'd call it "hillbilly hardcore." This CD has a trailer-trash twang to it. Sometimes they slide into a serious Butthole Surfers mode, with a little Melvins thrown in for good measure. I can't say I'd recommend this, but I can't say I don't like it either. Given time, Tex Svengali may grow on me. **(Opulence!)** *Eddie V. Migraine.*

FREDERICK THORDENDAL'S SPECIAL DEFECTS Sol Niger Within Version 3:33 CD

How in the hell am I supposed to review a 27 song CD? Tell me! If it was The Beatles, that'd be different, but 27 uncanny songs that's a different deal! My tolerance for the weird isn't very high. The first song, for various reasons, is a good example: [1] It has an odd title (most of the songs have long titles); [2] It's very heavy, which is good; [3] The voice and the "guitar" / "synthesizer" sort of ruin it for me. It soon becomes apparent that this CD is meant to be one big concept album! The songs blend together. I don't know if that's good or not. Again, I like the heavy rhythm guitars, but the rest is just too much for me! **[Relapse]** *Gerry Cummings.*

THE THUMBS Make America Strong CD

My band played with these guys in Portland, OR, and I must say they're a sonic assault. They give a nod to early Hüsker Dü in their Fast, Loud Rules approach. I can't think of a band to compare them to, so I'll say that the music is mostly straight ahead punk rock with a vocalist who can melodically yell in key. Nothing extremely groundbreaking, but I like it that way. Good old-fashioned punk and they aren't ashamed to play it that way. **[Soda Jerk]** *E. V Migraine.*

THUMPER Songs from the Grave CD

Sorry Thumper fans, no matter how catchy, even an Ozzy cover will not save your Farside / Mephiskapheles lovin' asses from being a day late and a dollar short. Metal ska-punk that makes me happy this band is long gone. **[Jump Up!]** *E. Emmitt.*

THE THUNDERGODS See You in Hell Kid CD

Deadboy's-style punk from up-state New York. Raw and filled with energy, they remind me of the San Francisco 70's punk greats Crime. They have a groove and primal feel that seems to be the "coming thing" to quote a TV cowboy. If you like the current rawk and / or punk bands like Electric Frankenstein, Candysnatchers and The Hellacopters, this should be right up your alley. Recommended if you like all that new-fangled punk rock. **[Trashcan]** *Eric Reanimator.*

TIGHT BROS. ...Runnin' Through My Bones CD

Stick out your index and pinky finger and bang your head, because this is rock-n-roll all the way! Total 70's metal that's often compared to AC/DC [thanks to Jared Warren's "Bon Scott" vocal style]. One can see that, but **Runnin' Through My Bones** also salutes the MC5, Slade, Alice Cooper, The Stooges and The Dead Boys. No epic 10-minute-long songs found on this baby, the Tight Bros. will have none of that. Cynics and lazy journalists will call this butt-metal or retro, but make no mistake that these boys just want to bring back the sound of how rock was meant to be: loud, crude and rude. **(Kill Rock Stars)** *Demangis.*

TRASH BRATS s/t CD

Detroiters or fans of glam-punk will instantly recognize this group as the perennial Detroit kings of lingerie-wearing glam-rock. I have to admit, the first time I saw these guys, the lingerie thing was a little too weird for me. Now that I'm older and (relatively) wiser, I'm glad I've gotten another chance to hear them. It's easy to see why the Brats have been doing this as long as they have, the songs are well-written, played with intensity and a sense of humor. The style is 70's glam-punk, similar to Teengenerate, but the Brats have been doing it longer and better. The only thing I didn't like about this album is the string of slower ballads in the middle, I've never been big on glam-ballads. That and I had a hard time getting this to play on my CD-player, but that's probably just the copy I got. Good for fans of rock, glam, punk, glam-rock, etc... **[I-94 Recordings]** *Karp.*

TREIOPS TREYFID Reach The Explosion! CD

If you take the cleverness out of The Dead Milkmen, the insanity out of Mr. Bungle and the angst out of The Dead Kennedys, you have Treiops Treyfid. I'm in no way comparing them to the aforementioned bands, because DK, The Milkmen and sometimes even Mr. Bungle all keep my attention and interest. This CD seems contrived and artsy-fartsy in order to be weird enough to attempt eclectically. None for me, thanks. **(Deep Reverb)** *Eddie V Migraine.*

THE TUTSIS s/t CD

My first thought when I opened up the envelope was "uh-oh, another demo cassette." But wait, this is good! Tutsis is crankin', high energy old style punk like X-ray Specs featuring saxophonist and lead vocalist Jana Byrdd Howes. Her screaming, powerful vocals are bolstered by big Jesse Ventura hammerlocks of gruff, gravelly vocals a la Lemmy like in "Day Of The Long Knives." The saltiest sea dog vocals, you'll want to clear your throat for him while Howes wails on sax. She plays warped saxophone versions of old familiar songs like "Strangers In The Night" and the theme for "The Andy Griffith Show" to separate the punk songs. Howes' fast talk-screaming vocals asks "*Has somebody done you wrong?*" in "Love Story." He pisses and moans, worried about his career but what about her? He's in debt, drunk, living in the past... all the right reasons for her to leave. "Beaver Attack" is about those that use and disgard people. "Dead Of Night" is a pure blast of Britpunk. Screeching brakes and lots of blood, it's hitchhikers beware as they drive drunk and idolize road rage. Come on, jump in the passenger seat and ride! **[c/o The Tutsis]** *Allen Salyer.*

THE TWITS s/t CD

Typical hardcore with a female singer that sounds a lot like the Cinder Block [Tilt]. As far as hardcore goes, this is pretty standard. Most of the songs are melodic, but once-in-a-while The Twits degenerate into nothing more than pounding and screaming. Some of the songs are pretty good, with nice melodies and good tempo changes ("Get Off My Back" is a good example), but most aren't noteworthy. The album's not bad, but it's not great either. **[Dirty]** *Karp.*

UK SUBS AWOL CD
UK SUBS Endangered Species CD

Two re-mastered and remixed classics from the grizzled ol' punk vets. I ran into Charlie Harper a few years back and told him he was responsible for all the wrong / stupid choices I've made since then. It was back in either 1977 or '78 when I first heard the UK Subs on the radio [playing "Stranglehold" on the old *Radios in Motion* show on WDET, I think] and how I've been hooked ever since. Harper looked at me as if I was some kind of stalker before walking off. Anyway, getting back to the CDs, they're both excellent artifacts for moldy-oldies [like yours truly] or, even better, as primers to the youngins out there who want to hear one o' the originals, not to mention one of the founders, of what's called nowadays as "street punk." Oi! Oi! Oi!, right mate? Of the 2 CDs, **Awol**, featuring songs recorded between 1981 and 1996, is hard and snotty, giving us high-quality Brit-punk, including such Subs' hits as "Self Destruct" and "War of the Roses." This disc totally rocks! Both young and old alike, will find themselves playing this CD again and again. **Endangered Species** came out in 1982 and is surprisingly more diverse than **Awol**, experimenting with different styles / genres, that one wouldn't expect from the UK Subs, although this was a time that punk was becoming stagnant or in its infancy, depending where you lived. Both discs are highly recommended to old-timers and youngsters alike. Kudos to New Red Archives for re-releasing these gems. Oi! Oi! Oi! **[New Red Archives]** *N. Zebrowski.*

VEGAS DEMILO Before It Gets Old CD

Before it gets old, Vegas, we should string up your CD like a mobile and hang it above the baby's crib. At least someone will find this pre-pubescent crap interesting. This is a smarmy, drab record that suffers unbearably from the smart-aleck wit of its creator ("Vanity Killed the Radio Star," Vegas' very vain take on the familiar "Video Killed the Radio Star," forced me to my bathroom to perform functions I will decline from elaborating on since this is, of course, a family publication). All and all, these guitar-propelled, sappy teenage meanderings are about as strong as Gumby-n-Pokey in a microwave. **(Starving Cowboy)** *Bob Toole.*

VIEWMASTER Laugh Lines CD

Viewmaster, a 3-piece band featuring former Das Damen drummer, Lyle Hysen, has produced a fairly sophisticated debut album. **Laugh Lines** starts out simple with pure unadulterated indie pop and then digs deeper to produce something more layered and complex. The album makes a definite turn about midway through, slowing down and stretching far from the pop songs early on. The band is reminiscent of a Yo La Tengo or Guided by Voices in that the mission of their music appears to change minute by minute. The style changes makes for interesting listening and the breathy male vocals are appealing. **(Popfactory)** *R. Overmyer.*

THE VINDICTIVES Leave Home CD

Man, they butchered this record. The Vindictives pay "tribute" to the Ramones, by covering their second album "Leave Home" in its entirety (this was following Screeching Weasel's rendition of their first record). It's a pretty redundant and worthless concept, except for calling attention to, "one of the greatest rock 'n roll bands ever." At least Screeching Weasel had the decency to cover it straight through without any changes. So, not only do The Vindictives do their own versions of classics like "Sheena is a Punk Rocker" and "Pinhead," with extended guitar solos and unnecessary backing vocals, but none of the songs are in the order of the original version. Blasphemy! **(Liberation)** *Demangis.*

THE VLADIMIRS Night Gallery CD

Okay, the guys who run ReAnimator Recs are super nice, they have their stuff together and have put out some pretty dandy releases before. But I'm sorry, I'm not into the whole horror-punk thing, which is exactly what the Vladimirs are all about. Comparisons to the Misfits and The Damned are pretty obvious, but when the keyboards and double bass drums kick in, that's when the interest vanishes. Sorry, Stephen. **(ReAnimator / Bloodpact Music)** *Demangis.*

TOM WAITS Mule Variations CD

One of the best things that happened to me, while living in Kalamazoo attending Western Michigan University, was getting the rare opportunity to see Tom Waits live at the State Theatre. I was working for the campus radio station WIDR 89FM doing a Saturday afternoon shift and Waits was touring for the Frank's Wild Year's record. He rarely tours and I knew this would be a special show. His record label at the time, Island, provided the station with tickets to give away, which I did during my shift, saving the best seats for myself and a couple of friends. Long story short, it was an incredible musical experience, one that I've never forgotten and it made me a Tom Waits fan for life.

Any time a new Waits' project surfaces, most music fans perk up and take notice. His latest release, **Mule Variations** [Epitaph], is one of the most important records you'll hear this year. Waits collaborates again with his wife, Kathleen Brennen, on most of the tracks and it's a collaboration that's proven successful in the past. The 3rd song on **Mule Variations** is marked by classic Waits' theme's: lost love, wanderlust and a passionate intensity virtually unmatched by any contemporary songwriter. *"Well, he gave her a Dimestore watch / And a ring made from a spoon / Everyone is looking for someone to blame / But you share my bed, you share my name / Well, go ahead and call the cops / You don't meet nice girls in coffee shops / She said, 'Baby I still love you' / Sometimes there's nothing left to do."* Waits has been recording music for over 25 years and since the '83 release Swordfishtrombones, he's been mashing different genres together with strange and eclectic instrumentation creating an original body of work. His impressionistic vocal landscapes are as cinematic as they are musical, which is why he's often been tapped by filmmakers for contributions to various soundtracks over the years including; *Dead Man Walking*, *Paradise Alley*, *On The Nickel* and the heartbreaking documentary about teens living on the street *Streetwise*. He's composed 2 complete film scores; for Francis Ford Coppola's *One From The Heart* and Jim Jarmusch's *Night On Earth*. Waits has also developed an extensive list of acting credits over the years, including: *The Outsiders*, *Rumblefish*, *Down By Law*, *Candy Mountain*, *Cold Feet*, *Queen's Logic*, a cameo in the brilliant Terry Gilliam's *The Fisher King*, Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and *Short Cuts*.

As of press time no extensive tour is planned for **Mule Variations**, there are 2 shows scheduled at the legendary Wiltern Theatre in Los Angeles and The Paramount Theatre in Oakland, California, along with select shows in Europe. I suspect that as the summer progresses, and this record starts making waves, a short US tour *might* be announced. If this happens, do yourself a favor and go. **[Epitaph]** *D. Wood.*

WATTSON s/t EP

A solid debut from this Michigan band, with a definite indie / emo slant. The first song, "Back Into Neutral," is catchy for roughly the first 3 minutes then, as it builds to a head, it sort of meanders its way to the end via the chorus. The 2nd and 4th tracks are more along the lines of what the first song promised; urgent rockers with interesting tension in the breakdowns. The 3rd song is a slower, prettier number, of the bunch, with its indie-rock leanings, fuzzy distortion and twangy structure. Overall, this is a good CD, with a range of influences diverse enough to escape most new band's tendencies towards becoming genre slaves. Can't wait to see them live. *E. Emmitt.*

THE WEBSTIRS **Rocket to the Moon** CD

Love 'em or hate 'em, you can't deny that The Beatles changed the course of modern music, and they still influence today's artists, nearly three decades after breaking up. The Webstirs have definitely studied 60's Beatles' influenced pop and understand the importance of strong melodies and harmonies. They sometimes slip slightly into a Jayhawks' mode. However, they aren't clones of anyone. My guess is that these guys are schooled musicians. What sets them apart is their refusal to complicate and muddy up the sound of their great hook-laden guitar pop songs. **(Ginger)** *Eddie V. Migraine.*

WEEPING IN FITS & STARTS **Blue Funnel World** CD

The first track, "U.G.L.Y. / Blue Funnel World," is a discordant, irritating instrumental that drones on for nearly 5 minutes. It's all downhill from there. Even though there are other musicians on the CD, it's billed as a "Greg Jacobs' project" -- he wrote all of the songs, sings them and runs the show, so I hold him responsible for my torture. The words "self indulgent" should be stenciled in large red letters across the front of this CD. We get a picture of Jacobs' apartment in Boston and one of Kenmore Square. Both are suitably "arty" for a project like this (and that's not a good thing). I felt like I was being forced to read a high schooler's diary -- 19 bloated tracks worth. One redeeming quality: at least it makes a good coaster. **[Rhubarb]** *Jamie DePolo.*

WHISTLER s/t CD

Whistler is a cool and collected, very British trio led by Ian Dench (formerly of EMF -- he's the one responsible for "Unbelievable") and Kerry Shaw, who's the primary singer. Whistler instantly reminded me of a folky Everything But The Girl or The Young Marble Giants. Gorgeous female vocals float over lush, ethereal music, blending until the vocals become another instrument. The songs are about emotions, rendered precisely and calmly without the sloppy sentimentality us Yanks favor. From "Don't Jump in Front of My Train": "*You took too many pills again today / I really do not have that much to say / You're tragic yes I know / You think it's part of the job though / We both know you're not insane / So don't jump in front of my train.*" My feelings exactly. The truth may hurt, but when Whistler are conveying it, it's beautiful. **[Wiiija / Beggars Banquet]** *J. DePolo.*

BILLY JACK WILLS & HIS WESTERN SWING BAND **Crazy, Man Crazy!** CD

Originally released on Western Recs in 1983, and long since out of print, this is an updated version that's been re-mastered, pressed on CD and comes complete with bonus tracks. Billy Jack and His Western Swing Band existed from 1950 to '55, tearing up the West Coast with their raucous brand of western swing and rock-n-roll. When they weren't touring, Wills and his band were regulars every morning on KFBK in Sacramento, a deal which provided them exposure, but no money directly (although the generous station managers allowed them to promote their barn dances). When Billy Jack and Band were on the road, they cut transcription discs, which helped them maintain a presence on KFBK until they returned. The cuts on this CD are transfers from transcriptions between the years 1952-'54; the final track even starts with the band's mandolin player announcing the time and day of their regular radio spot. While much of the newer western swing re-issues are recently discovered transcriptions, they can be hit-or-miss and often pale in comparison to an artist's regular label recordings. However, in the case of Billy Jack Wills, none of his albums released on Four Star and MGM are available. Fortunately, these transcriptions stand out as a strong musical outing, showcasing a brand of western swing that is heavily jazz-influenced, with elements of King Recs-era rhythm and blues thrown into the mix. Here the transcription format allows the band increased time to improvise and trade solos, not being constrained, time-wise, to one side of a 78 RPM record. These arrangements are augmented with wonderful steel guitar from Vance Terry. Terry's amazing work is evident on songs like "Jazz Me the Blues", where the steel intertwines with a Telecaster, trading licks back and forth over a backdrop of horns. The excellent packaging and liner notes (courtesy of Rich Kienzle) provide further insight into the career of Billy Jack Wills, the younger brother of Bob Wills, but 21-years younger. **Crazy, Man, Crazy!** captures a highly energetic western swing band at a musical highpoint. **(Joaquin)** *D. Neal.*

WITCHMAN VS JAMMIN UNIT **Inferno** CD

This release is full of surprises. At first, I thought it would be more drum 'n' bass overkill, yet as I listened things started happening. After the hard intro, the beats mellow out and diversify. Inspired by Jammin Unit's album Deaf, Dub and Blind, Witchman hooks it up on **Inferno**. This album progresses from hard hitting bass rhythms to danceable dub. It reminds me of Massive Attack's No Protection album, which itself is a masterpiece. **Inferno** has a mellow flavor that's ever changing. Pick this one up! **(Invisible)** *M. Milonas.*

SHANNON WRIGHT **Flightsafety** CD

Flightsafety is Shannon Wright's first solo effort and, in leaving NYC to record in Alabama, her intimate, highly personal songs lose none of the melancholic poignancy that saw through 2 Crowsdell albums. Recorded virtually alone (fittingly), **Flightsafety** is a personal reckoning, an album about being disconnected by a voice who is alone. Many of Wright's songs on **Flightsafety** are haunted by sparse string arrangements, working most effectively on "Floorpile" and the full-bodied "William's Alabama." Some of the melodies are dangerous-sounding re-workings of nursery rhymes, as on "All These Things," where Wright's softly precocious voice lilts up-and-down like a carousel horse. The songs that work best, "You're The Cup" and "Captain of Quarantine," feature Wright's wispy vocals, accompanied by her lonely acoustic guitar and the saddest piano I've ever heard. As you'd expect, Wright's disjointed lyrics borrow from her personal text of unconventional imagery. The brilliance is in her fragile voice, a voice that sharply conveys the sadness universal to everyone. **Flightsafety** is an excellent album, a perfect soundtrack for times when you feel that you don't know the world and it doesn't know you. **(Quarterstick)** *Bob Toole.*

V/A **Drinking From Puddles** CD

Drinking From Puddles offers some exceptional music. It's a collection of live, in-studio recordings from Portland's KBOO public radio station that dares to play new music and unknown bands. It's because of this that the station makes little money, so proceeds from this Kill Rock Star release go to the radio station. The 22 track album has a nice mix of music. There are the punk rockers. Murder City Puddles is punk in the vein of the UK Subs. Hazel's cacophony-style of punk mixes male / female vocals. Poison Idea is punk with organ. Dead Moon is slamming rockabilly punk. Crackerbash is loud, bass driven grunge. Nearly half the songs are acoustic guitar and singer / songwriter music that tends to be longer. Come's acoustic rendition of "Hurricane" highlights Thadek's angry vocals in a flat, Dylan-esque voice. She's not dead yet. Kristen Hersh's "Gazebo Tree" could easily fit on the "Murder, Misery And Then Goodnight" album. Roger Manning has good command of his acoustic guitar, singing "*I'm from the anti-bullshit movement.*" Also included are Cindy Lee Berryhill, Obituary, Jeffrey Lee Pierce, Elliott Smith, Cat Power and minimalist folksters, the Geraldine Fibbers. I liked Gilly Ann Hanner's tongue-in-cheek song because of the line "*The world's a mess. I'm not screaming at you. I'm screaming with you.*" Ex-Tiger Trap vocalist Madigan has a beautiful cello and voice number singing of new fallen snow; the cello bow brushes the snow off your shoulders. There are 3 spoken word pieces, called in over the phone. Pleasant Gehman tells of the delights of Disneyland's exhibit "Monsanto," about the wonders of the future, though hipsters recall Monsanto for the wondrous drugs they manufactured. Lydia Lunch reads from her book *Paradoxia*, as victim turns predator, exorcising many of her demons. Nicole Panter's contribution is her "sexual autobiography," highlighting sneaky sex. The songs that standout are by Cadallaca and Prolapse. Cadallaca's "You're My Only One" has a garage-style immediacy, as the instruments take a back seat to the vocals. Prolapse has nice vocal harmony between an Irish accented talk-sing male voice and angelic female voice over moody guitars. **[Kill Rock Stars]** *Allen Salyer.*

V/A **A Cat-Shaped Hole in My Heart** CD

Another excellent album to add to Projekt's long list of great releases. This comp grew out of Sam Rosenthal's [Projekt's founder] grief after his cat passed away. Aside from having a slew of great musicians / bands [14 to be exact, including Faith & the Muse, Area, Thomas Thorn (Electric Hellfire Club) and black tape for a blue girl], each contributing one track about their own cat[s], has provided us with a nearly flawless CD, most of whom are not on Projekt, Rosenthal is donating all of the artist's royalties to the Chicago-based charity, THE TREE HOUSE, "a 'no-kill' cat shelter." [Look for additional info in the booklet that comes with this CD.] Stellar performances from this diverse collection of ethereal, Gothic and darkwave artists. All 14 songs are superb, but the song that caught my attention was / is "Cayman" from Mira. Haunting and extremely beautiful, the singer's voice is almost operatic and very seductive. "Cayman" is the type of song you'll play repeatedly and *never* grow tired of listening to. This is a great comp, whose profits goes to charity. What are you waiting for, go buy it! **[Projekt]** *N. Zebrowski*

V/A **Extracted Celluloid** CD

This is the second installment in the "Illegal Art series." The first, Deconstructing Beck, brought us a compilation of sound manipulators whose only limitation was using popular music icon "Beck" as their primary source for a musical canvas. **Extracted Celluloid** is constructed entirely from film samples (hence its title..) and it's better than its Beck counterpart. Leading off with the "Titanic" theme, Rudjak Manigz (most of the participatory artists are layered deep with pseudonyms) has stretched the original voice and echoed it, while at the same time providing the song's rhythm with what sounds like the sounds of the ship actually breaking apart. Ironically, this song is more powerful than James Cameron's film itself. It sounds as if Julee Cruise was sent through 1000 processors. Huk Don Phun follows with "Three Kung Fu Pieces." He / She has managed to sample the best bits of Kung Fu movie action sound effects, including the scratchy "swish" when actors wave their arms through the air. The difference here is that the effects swim violently in and out of existence with a sawtooth synth algorithm. Joseph Hyde's "Manic" is one of the more powerful pieces. The source material is difficult to pin down, but the songs explode in your face with immediacy. It runs 6 minutes, through a number of suspense / action theme clichés. One of the more impressive pieces, by Wet Gate, is a musique concrete lover's dream. The sound of a creaking ship hums along, until the end of the song, when it resembles more of a tinny train engine. Equally tinny-sounding thunder blasts at random moments, and an announcer interrupts each momentary lapse of reason with, "*Does your brain now tell you what's making this sound?...Of course.*" Later we get a deconstruction of some of Ennio Morricone's work, incestuous "Wizard of Oz" interpretations and plastic surgery disasters. Like the Beck project, **Extracted Celluloid** works less on a song front, and more on an experimental sound experience. Snippets of familiar films will flash by, only to be completely destroyed and manipulated into something unexpected. Compilations of this caliber are few and far between. **[Illegal Art / Seeland]** *Davis Ford.*

V/A **Fat Music, Vol. IV** CD

Another "best of Fat Wreck Chords" sampler that shows off the what's hip and happening on this label. At only $3, it's almost worth the price, considering that 90% of this has already been available to the public. Unless you must have *everything* by the likes of Good Riddance, Avail and No Use For A Name; all whom have unreleased material on here, it's at least worth the price to see what this label has to offer. Like the first comp, Fat Music For Fat People, **Fat Music Vol. IV** gets 3 stars alone for coming up with this idea. Other highlights include Lagwagon, NOFX, Wizo, Strung Out and the Swingin' Utters. **(Fat Wreck Chords)** *Demangis.*

V/A **Fish Tree Water Blues** CD

The proceeds of this compilation go towards the Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund. In short, the money goes to the preservation of endangered species, ancient forests and clean water. If the cause doesn't get you, maybe the artists will. Ani DiFranco offers a track called "Fuel," a poem recited over a makeshift jam session. Other notables are Keb' Mo', Etta James, Alvin Youngblood Hart, John Lee Hooker and Ratdog. Twists on The Eagles "Take It to the Limit" and

Al Green's "Take Me to the River," along with the gospel song "I'll Fly Away" are joined by a few originals geared towards the cause. The CD also includes a CD-ROM presentation of Earthjustice's campaign. Tracy Nelson sums it up with "Mother Earth," "*I don't care how rich you are, I don't care what you're worth. What it comes down to is you've got to go back to Mother Earth.*" (**Bullseye Blues & Jazz**) *M. Milonas.*

V/A **Gothic Erotica...** CD

Why won't Goth music die? It's already undead. Ha!

The cover and CD jackets consist of dozens of bondage bands in leather and rubber bondage gear. Why? I dunno. **Gothic Erotica** is a 6-CD box set that studies the relationship between Gothic music and sex. The vocals range between deep, brooding, baritone men and heavenly, ethereal women. This is as much a history of Goth as it is a collection of music. Featuring originals like Christian Death (the stalking, march-like "The Nascent Virion"), Bauhaus ("Boys"), Red Lorry Yellow Lorry ("Beating My Head"), The decay of the original Sisters Of Mercy which lead to The Mission ("Stars Don't Shine Without You") and Sisters ("Temple Of Love"), the first incarnation of the Eldridge / Morrison team. Newer artists like This Ascension ("In The Flat Field"), Ikon ("She's In Parties"), Notwist ("Torture Day") and punk rockers like the Stranglers ("Peasant In The Big Shitty"), Iggy Pop and the Stooges ("Cock In My Pocket") and The Damned ("Torture Me") are represented. There's Sally Timms (Mekons) with Marc Almond (Soft Cell) on "This House Is A House Of Trouble"; the original Goth girl, Nico, singing "Femme Fatale" and "Janitor Of Lunacy." Arthur Brown, known for the outrageous "Fire," speaks of the "Vampire." The comic presence of Alien Sex Fiend ["Class of '69" / "Lickin' Ma Bone"] and Psychic TV [featuring ex-Throbbing Gristle Genesis P-Orridge] playing the ridiculously funky dance hit "Horror House." Highlights include some of the best early Goth bands like Skeletal Family ("All She Cries" / "So Pure") and the later incarnation, Ghost Dance (covering the Animal's "Heart Full Of Soul"), both of which feature the vocals of Anne-Marie. Pauline Murray gets lots of coverage with ("Free Money") and without ("Screaming In The Darkness" / "She Is The Slave") Penetration as well as the Pauline Murray and the Invisible Girls rarity ("Judgement Day") featuring Wayne Hussey in limbo between Sisters Of Mercy and The Mission. Lydia Lunch contributes 2 songs, "Burning Skulls" and the violent, super-percussive "Stinkfist." Can't get the original Gothic greats? **Gothic Erotica** offers some incredible simulations: Beki Bondage sounding like a Midwestern Patti Smith, sings "Because The Night"; Mephisto Waltz offers their churning, feedback laced version of Siouxsie and the Banshees "Israel;" Electric Hellfire Club doing Bauhaus' "Bela Lugosi's Dead;" and Brix Smith presents a female version of David Bowie's "Space Oddity." New bands include Inkubus Sukkubus ("Spellbound"), who sound like Kiss; the keyboard-heavy yet energetic Sin ("Skin"); Faithful Dawn, whose "Enchant Me" brings to mind a female Dead Or Alive and Lucyfix ("Hole In Me") doing her best Patti Smith. The best discovery was Scarehead ("Mother"), who know how to build up a song. There are a few puzzling entries, like Echo and the Bunnymen ("Pictures On My Wall") and Gene Loves Jezebel ("Sweet Rain" / "Suspicion"). I've never thought of Echo as Gothic, more like alternative / punk, and I'll never understand why G.L.J. are on so many Gothic compilations, they're so... pedestrian. [**Dressed To Kill**] *Allen Salyer.*

V/A **Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels** CD [soundtrack]

Ever since *Trainspotting* blew up like a firecracker, we've been bombarded with pseudo-substitutes. ***Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*** is no exception. British thugs beat people left and right, drink pints, do drugs, blah, blah, blah. Irvine Walsh they're not. So, with the movie being no good, the soundtrack is even worse. "Lock's" fleeting glimpse with greatness occurs with the Stooges "I Wanna Be Your Dog." The relatively unknown Ocean Colour Scene give it the old college try with "100 Mile High City." And the late, great, Dusty Springfield is featured on the elegant "Spooky." The rest of the album is a grab bag of nobodies. Listen once -- then destroy. [**Maverick**] *Chris Wardell.*

V/A **The Matrix** CD [soundtrack]

Howard Stern mentioned that he saw ***The Matrix***, starring Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne, and liked it, but was confused by the film. Got the same story from our bald-headed publisher so I'll go with that angle. I haven't seen the pic myself, but I can tell you the soundtrack is a full pant-load. Marilyn Manson, Rage Against The Machine, Proppelerheads, Rammstein, Prodigy, Rob Zombie, Deftones, Monster Magnet and Meat Beat Manifesto have all contributed great music here. Soundtracks frequently get loaded down with filler, and you may get one or two standout songs [if you're lucky], but that's not the case here. Very solid collection of aggressive music. [**Maverick / Warren Brothers**] *D. Wood.*

V/A **Office Space** CD [soundtrack]

Uh Bevis, this soundtrack is pretty cool. Who would've known that the creator of *Bevis & Butthead* was a rap fan? Mike Judge makes the big screen plunge with his first non-animated feature film. This soundtrack features a hodge-podge of old and new rappers. From legends like Ice Cube and the Getto Boys, to newbies Slum Village and Kool Keith. Canibus and Biz Markie provide the album's best track with "Shove this Jay Oh Be." What I want to know, where's Metallica and AC/DC? [**Interscope**] *Chris Wardell.*

V/A: **Punk-a-Rama Vol. 4: Straight Outta The Pit** CD

This annual summer sampler series has become one of the most reliable collections around. The awesome Epitaph Recs puts these out each year as a primer for the *Van's Warped Tour*. Epitaph is the premier punk label with a roster of diverse artists that is unmatched by any of its competitors including: Voo Doo Glow Skulls, Zeke, New Bomb Turks, Dwarves, NOFX, All, H20, Pennywise (who did a marvelous drunken turn as guests on the "*Loveline*" radio show with Dr. Drew and the hilarious Adam Carolla the other night), Bad Religion, Agnostic Front, Rancid, Tom Waits, Straight Faced, Ten Foot Pole and a wad of others that would make your spikes stand up straight and proud. As mentioned earlier, this collection serves as a great warm up the Van's Warped Tour which lands at the Phoenix Plaza in Pontiac on Sunday July 25th. The very successful *Warped* Tour has become one of the best things about summer and each year I plan my life around it, eagerly anticipating a long day in the hot sun. The hell with barbecues and family reunions and bonfires and camping and going to the lake and folk festivals and hippies and hotdogs and Regis Philbin and Birkenstocks... gimme the goddamned Warped Tour and Epitaph Records and get outta my way. [**Epitaph**] *D. Wood.*

VA **Punk 'Til Ya Poop** CD

As with most comps, some bands suck, some of the songs and most of the production sucks. This comp has some gems, however. Dain Bramaged's take on "Devil Went Down To Georgia" is amazing. Instead of playing fiddles, Johnny and Satan have a drinking contest. Less Than Jake, Welt, Link 80, Mandingo, At The Drive In and Bickley contribute to this 32 band / song comp. It's worth getting for sure, just be prepared for some awful stuff along with the good. (**Bad Stain**) *Eddie V Migraine.*

V/A **Relapse Sampler '99** CD

A cheap-o sampler from Relapse Recs showcasing their up-and-coming bands for 1999. It's true that all of this [give or take a couple songs] has been previously released, but it's a great way to get introduced to some of the heaviest grind that's out there. Highlights include Neurosis, Soylent Green, Benumb, Agoraphobic Nosebleed, Exhumed, Nasum and The Dillinger Escape Plan. And whatever on here doesn't make a good impression at least makes up for a good laugh; cheesy death metal always creates an unintentional laugh. (**Relapse**) *Demangis.*

V/A **The Renaissance Album** CD

Cool Renaissance-era music. While listening, I imagined that I was watching movies like *Elizabeth*, *Shakespeare in Love*, etc. What amazed me is there are 17 songs by 17 different artists / groups / duos! Among them, Michael Hedges and Ann and Nancy Wilson. The other artists sound familiar, but Hedges and the Wilson sisters are the most well known. Hedges has carved a solo career for himself, while the Wilson sisters are, ironically [as most of you know], the "heart" of *Heart*! The songs here aren't new songs inspired by

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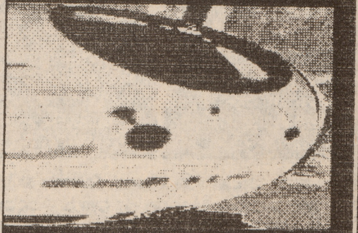

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Renaissance music, but actual "modern" versions of well-known songs from the Renaissance, or songs by composers from that era. Obviously, I was inclined toward liking, first and foremost, the songs from the artists I knew. But as it turned out, the *whole* CD is great. How could it not be? The music is timeless! **[The Windhall Hill Group]** *Gerry Cummings.*

V/A Return of the Read Menace CD

This is a benefit for everyone's favorite anarchist publishing company, AK Press. The bands on this comp each offered an unreleased song, and vary from the poppiest-punk to straightforward hardcore, with acoustic stuff and one spoken word piece as well. All in all, this is *really* good, although 25% of these songs are covers and tend to be copycat versions (except The Weakerthans' Phil Ochs' song, NUFAN's Misfits' cover and, maybe, Avail's version of "Suspicious Minds," oh, and while I'm still in parentheses, the Levellers should get kicked out of whatever mod scene they think they belong to for their super-sterile Small Faces' cover). Cooper's awesome, Screeching Weasel's as good as ever, J Church, Discount and Hot Water Music are, too. The real winners are Kalamazoo's Quixote and Atom and his Package's tribute to Rob Halford, in which he postulates that there's a 40% chance one of the guys in Pantera is gay. This is a pretty good comp for a good cause, despite weak offerings by Chumbawamba and Wat Tyler; and they aren't even necessarily awful. Follow your own conscience on this one. **[Honest Don's / AK Press]** *E. Emmitt.*

V/A Short Music for Short People CD

Alright, normally a 101-band comp would be really annoying to review. However, when all of the songs are under 38 seconds, even the worst bands can't overstay their welcome. Usually, I'd write a CD like this off as a stupid gimmick, but it's amazing how some of these bands can pull it off, most notably Blink 182, Bad Religion, the Dillinger 4, Screeching Weasel and the 10-second burst of MTX's "Told You Once" [on which they actually swear!]. This has everyone from Poison Idea to Green Day on it and, as I said before, nothing here is long enough to hate, except Black Flag's "TV Party," especially when it's like the millionth time you've heard that worthless excuse for a song. **[Fat Wreck Chords]** *E. Emmitt.*

V/A Skins' N' Pins CD

I don't care what anyone says about street-punk, it's still hard to review a 28-song comp. Anyway, everyone wins on this one, with exceptions to Major Accident's gruff pop-punk, the Unseen's bland hardcore edge and Condemned 84's gruff nonsense. Hands down, the Stray Bullets own this release. Do you like street punk? There are only 3 bad songs on this, the rest is the best... minus [maybe] The Templars. 25 out of 28 sounds good to me. Oi! **[G.M.M.]** *E. E.*

V/A Suck It & See... CD

As a lifelong fan of pornography, I held high hopes that **Suck It & See...** would be a stimulating addition to my nightly consumption of videotaped sex acts and chat room cyberfxxxs. Pussyfoot Recs promised, *"an hour-and-a-half of utterly satisfying aural sex,"* but delivered only tepid, uninvolving DJ tracks peppered with vague porno samples and uninspired S&M narration to make it "sexy." Are names like Howie B, DJ Miku or Nick Faber important to you? Maybe you could get turned on by this thing, but I'm the kind of guy who wants to hear Metal Machine Music while I'm having sex. Or Highway to Hell. This will never get me stiff. **(Pussyfoot)** *Fred Beldin.*

V/A Swing Sucks: A Compilation of the Finest in Contemporary Swing CD

Hey, at least they're admitting it. Martini anyone? Though this release has a few promising tracks, you can file it right next to your Cherry Poppin' Daddies collection. The approach is original, I'll give it that. I've never heard of a punk band daring enough to call themselves Lee Press On and the Nails. Contemporary swing, as far as I've experienced on this release, is not too far from the old biz daddy O. I guess I swing towards the originals. **(Liberation)** *M. Milonas.*

V/A Take Action! CD

This is a benefit for the Foundation Fighting Blindness, featuring some of the best punk bands of the late '90s, like the Dillinger 4 and Kid Dynamite alongside the likes of "veterans" Fifteen, FYP and Scared of Chaka. For the most part, this is excellent. The Weakerthans folk-punk and Algebra One's dirty pop are the standouts, with solid offerings all-around by everyone else. As far as I'm concerned, this is only $4, so there's no excuse for not owning it. **[Sub City]** *E. Emmitt.*

Alarm Clock
featuring women in music
#36
Sleater-Kinney
Also: Cadallaca. Quasi. Suzanne Vega. Colleen Coadic. Sarah McLachlan. Marion de Laat. Accordion Crimes. Kristin Hersh. Murder Ballads. Ani DiFranco. Amber Asylum. Clone. Diane Izzo. Laura Love. Beth Orton. Julie Ruin. Patti Smith. Cranberries and All Kindsa Girls

Alarm Clock

featuring Women in Music

(checks to:)

Allen Salyer
P.O. Box 1551
Royal Oak, MI 48068-1551

Issue #36

$2.50 - 40 pages

Digest Size (5-1/2" by 8-1/2")

-- the SMACK DOWN hotel --

By D. WOOD

Pedro LANZA

Welcome to a new feature here at **ETCH**. This column will be devoted to the wonderful world of professional wrestling. Some **ETCH** staffers are admitted [or closet] wrestling fans. This column will give you the backstage scoop and the stories behind the story lines. I'll also do my best to keep you informed on important dates for wrestling shows in Michigan.

As I'm sure you all heard recently **Owen Hart** died in a tragic accident at a **World Wrestling Federation [WWF]** Pay-Per-View at the Kemper Arena in Kansas City. Hart, in his Blue Blazer character, was preparing to be lowered from the roof of the arena, when he plunged 70 feet to his death. While investigations are ongoing, one thing is certain, the wrestling world has lost one of its greatest stars. Hart's brother, **Brett "The Hit Man" Hart** has been very vocal criticizing WWF President **Vince McMahon** in the media lately, for the direction he's taken pro wrestling in the last couple of years. The WWF "Monday Night Raw" program, the highest rated wrestling program on television, is often laden with sexual references and material not appropriate for children and Hart has said that his kids are not allowed to watch the show. Brett Hart has an axe to grind with McMahon and this is his chance to do it. While in the media spotlight, McMahon used some dirty tactics when Hart was released from the WWF contract. If you're interested in the story, I direct you to A&E's Brett Hart documentary for the details. The death of Owen Hart is a tragedy, but Brett Hart's criticism of the WWF rings a tad hollow. Rival promotion **World Championship Wrestling**, owned by **Ted Turner**, uses the same gimmick of lowering a wrestler from the ceiling (ex. **Sting**) frequently and this accident could have occurred at a WCW PPV just as easily. In fact, WCW President **Eric Bischoff** has stated that WCW will no longer be using this gimmick.

While I'm a fan of the two major promotions, the real action in pro wrestling today is in the **Extreme Championship Wrestling** promotion. ECW is a smaller company without the money of the other two, but their product is consistently better and their stars work harder and you get more bang for your buck. ECW has a weekly cable show that currently runs on WADL TV 38 in Detroit [Thursday nights at 11:00pm]. But, in late breaking news, the ECW will be carried on The Nashville Network (TNN) starting this fall. The ECW program will run side by side with "RollerJam" forming a sports entertainment block on Friday nights. TNN beams directly into over 92 million cable homes in the U.S. This will give ECW a huge push. Sure hope ECW President **Paul Heyman** doesn't have to tone down the product for the larger audience. The next ECW Pay Per View is "Heatwave '99" which will be broadcast live from the same venue it did last year, The Hara Arena in Dayton, Ohio. Etch editor Norm and I attended last year's event and it was a great night of solid mat action. I urge you to get tickets for the show or call your local cable company and tell them you want to "Get Extreme!"

Here in Lansing we have a new upstart wrestling promotion called **Hardcore Championship Wrestling**. The first HCW show, "Hostile Takeover," was held on April 23rd at the FunTyme Golf Dome in Okemos, and although marred by poor attendance due to a last minute venue change, promoters **Steve Londeau**, **Rob Webb** and **Mark Kobayashi** put together a great night of hardcore wrestling action that saw a HCW Heavywight champion crowned, as well as a 20 man battle royal and plenty of broken tables and barbed wire. **Skull Ganz** is the HCW champion and some of the other wrestlers that appeared include; **Mason Hunter**, **The Canadian Destroyer #3**, **Mr. Meaner**, **Hoss James**, **The Scufflin' Hillbillies** (my personal favorites), **Pain The Ass Kicker**, **The Greek Assassin**, **"Diamond" Dave Donovan**, **Major Disaster** and, in a match that saw an HCW tag team crowned, **The Scarrboni Brothers** [with manager **"Handsome" Johnny Bradford**] took on **Menace 2 Society**. HCW hopes to have its next show some time this summer; we'll keep you posted. You can purchase a video tape of the April 23rd show or find out more information about upcoming HCW events by calling (517) 393-8455. You can also visit HCW on the World Wide Web by typing http://members.xoom.com/HCWfan/HCW.html. Support local independent wrestling promotions!

UPCOMING PAY PER VIEW SCHEDULE:

Extreme Championship Wrestling [ECW] "Heatwave '99" 7-18-99 PPV

LIVE SCHEDULE:

World Championship Wrestling [WCW]:

July 30th- Flint, Mi. @ IMA Arena
July 31st- Grand Rapids, Mi. @ Van Andel Arena
August 1st- Battle Creek, Mi. @ Kellogg Arena

World Wrestling Federation [WWF]:

August 8th- Detroit, Mi. @ Joe Louis Arena –Taping "Sunday Night Heat"

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BOOKS

THE PASSIONATE EYE: THE COMPLETE WRITINGS OF SUZANNE VEGA

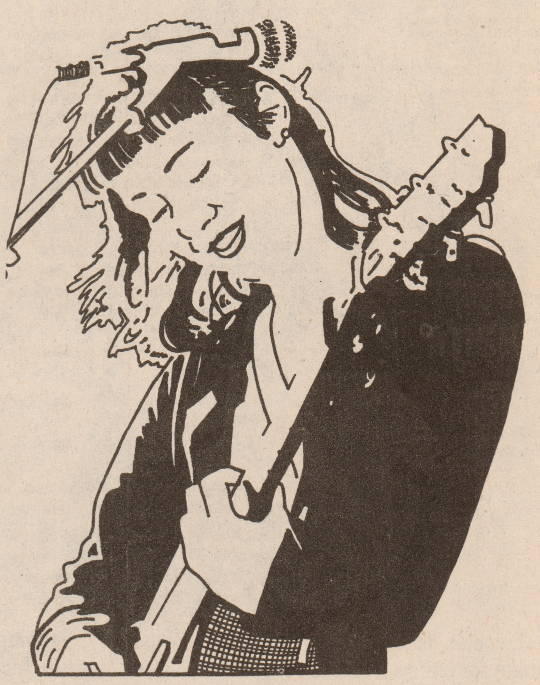
Avon -1999 - 288 pages - $23.00

Suzanne Vega has always been a great storyteller. Her explanations of how she creates the songs are as compelling as the songs themselves. Did you see her appearance on "VH1 Storytellers"? It's her ability to translate her "passionate eye" observations into words that is special. The simplicity and detail of her song "Tom's Diner" is a good example, as she plays voyeur to the stage play of people's everyday lives, diagnosing the overheard conversations and imagined thoughts.

The book is chock full of poems and stories, interviews and song lyrics with lots of nice graphic layouts and good use of fonts. You get to see her songs as poems, disconnected from the music. The section entitled "On Being Photographed" has some line drawing self-portraits but there are so very few photos of herself. She expresses her reservations about a camera·shoot with Tori Amos after Amos' famous Pele album which has a piglet suckling on her breast. "What if she brings in her pig?" There are 1982 journal entries. She talks about how to fight: "To survive in LA, you have to be sexy, to survive in New York, you have to be tough." In an interview with Leonard Cohen, he gives her a hard time when he realizes that he has released more albums than she.

I enjoyed her death poem sequence ("Cremation," "Tombstone," and "Gravedigger") the best. The essence of "Tulips" seems to be take them home, watch them die. On other writers: "Kafka was a roach. Dostoevsky was a mouse. I am a fly on the wall of this place."

"Anti-Hero" is the summation of her art: "I smash my head against the world until I understand it." Her inspiration? It's "what I know to be true, what I see especially in the streets of New York, and what I imagine." A must for the Suzanne Vega fan or anyone who likes good writing. ***Allen Salyer***.



SUZANNE VEGA ~ ©1999 ~ ALLEN SALYER

'ZINES

ANARCHY BOB #1 25-cents ¼-size 6pp. xerox

A short, sloppy, well-drawn comic about a punk. This issue includes Bob vs. a Jehovah's Witness zombie. Entertaining but short. I'd like to see more. [c/o AnarchyBob@hotmail.com] ***Chad Overdose.***

ANNEXX #12 free 54pp. newsprint standard size

A darn good zine with lots to read. A couple of articles on society's present danger and the fear of the future. There's a report on the SXSW organization; along with stories on The New Bomb Turks, Good Riddance, Flatus and Giant Ant Farm. There are also music and zine reviews, a small piece on old school sk8 boarding and movie soundtrack reviews, including such classics as Plan 9 From Outer Space, Blacula, Repo Man and Superfly. [POB 18475 San Antonio TX 78218-0475] ***C. Overdose.***

COREKILL ZINE #6 $1 + a stamp ½-size 28pp. xerox

This zine and I didn't get off to a good start. When pulling off the many pieces of tape that held the zine shut, one strip gave way and I punched myself unexpectedly in the gut, which left me breathless while my wife rolled her eyes and laughed. Thoroughly covers the Dayton, OH scene, including interviews with a local record store owner and local artist, as well as cool places to shop, hangout, eat and get an education. *Corekill* also contains an interview with Apocalypse Hoboken, music-n-zine reviews, comics featured by Matt Collins (they're "Far Side" rip-offs but still good) and more. All in all, I've forgiven the zine makers for the self-inflicted blow to the gut. [c/o Tom Watson 3240 N. Marshall Rd. #1 Kettering OH. 45429] ***Chad Overdose.***

CORNFLAKE OVERDOSE [Punk & Horror] #3 $2.00ppd. 36pp. xerox

Cut-n-paste 'zines were [and still are] the backbone for the punk scene, long before p-rock went corporate in the early '90s. Info went out to scenesters which kept the movement vibrant and well-informed, not to mention helped innumerables get the exposure they deserved. *C.O.* follows in that proud tradition. Along with many reviews, there are interviews of Bruce Campbell [Evil Dead], horror-meister Tom Savini, former Misfits' singer Myke Hideous [now a member of Empire Hideous], Blanks 77 and former Accused / Fartz frontman Blaine Cook. This is edition is labeled the "Battle Creek sucks" issue, inspired in part by *ETCH* CEO Ken Knott [see *C.O.*'s letters section]. Humorous, well thought out and informative, *CornFlake Overdose* is a worthwhile read. [c/o 38 Highland Ave. Battle Creek MI 49015] ***N. Zebrowski.***

HIT LIST #2 $3.95

Check out your local music store and flip through this baby. Great columns from your favorite opinionated jerks, Ben Weasel, Rev. Norb, Gregg Turner (Angry Samoans), East Bay Ray (ex-Dead Kennedys) and more. Gregg Turner has a disgusting, yet poignant, column about the state of music today. There's an interview by Ben Weasel with Jesse Michaels [lead singer of Operation Ivy] that's funny and informative at the same time. Other interviews include: the second part of a Fastback's feature, as well as an intelligent conversation with Oi! band The Templars. And, of course, there are reviews of a stack o' records. These guys do quality work. Once again, and I'm paraphrasing myself now, "...[it's] worth the $4." ***Stefan Peterson.***

HOOFSIP #48 $1.50 25 pp. xerox standard size

I always look forward to getting each new issue when it comes out. I think the reason I like it so much, is because it's got a lot of the same type of humor and silliness that my own zine has (CornFlake Overdose... shameless plug). Too many zines lack a sense of humor or anything entertaining to read. This is always a must read, despite what *MRR* says about it. In this issue: 8-track tape reviews (this is getting old), funny comments on ridiculous real life products, an article on "Bonkies" [as opposed to "wiggers"], interviews with They Might Be Giants and Bag Of Hammers, things to do in a public bathroom, a comic, reviews, and more. [PO Box 7636 Bloomfield Hills, MI. 48302-7636] ***C. Overdose.***

LUHEYS REGARDS TO ZINELAND 25-cents ¼-size 22pp. xerox

I've seen this guy's stuff a couple of times, and either he's easily amused or there's some kind of inside story to this that I have no clue about. Each page contains a single cartoon with the same characters saying one-liners like: "*Happiness....is comin' back to 'zineland after a long vacation*" or "*Success....is bein' a 'zinester 'lapdog' in funnies.*" See what I mean?! The artwork is somewhat original, but I think the only audience that would find this entertaining are the same old ladies that collect kitchen witches, crafts and own at least one poodle. [c/o T.R. Miller POB 234 Milltown NJ. 08850-0234] ***C. Overdose.***

IMPACT PRESS #15 free newsprint standard size 38 pp.

Often, when reading *MRR*'s columns, or any other well-established punk zine, the columnist's choice of big words / terminology often makes my intellect seem neglected or rather elementary, therefore I get bored and lose interest. Not with the columns herein, however. They were stimulating, and I was relieved and enlightened to find that my comprehension was seemingly adequate, far surpassing any expectations that I might have had in myself. Forgive me for speaking so extemporaneously. Besides the stimulating columns, there are record reviews and the confession of a phone psychic (which in itself makes this zine worth picking up). A very cool freebie. [c/o 10151 University blvd., suite 151 Orlando FL 32817] ***Chad Overdose.***

LUNCH Vol. 3 #4 18 pp. ½-size

A short zine, filled with some xeroxed photography and well-written columns. Also included: letters, poetry, cut-n-paste and not much else. There's no price on the cover, but if you're interested, throw them some stamps. [POB 45529 Phoenix, AZ 85064] ***Chad Overdose.***

MOD MAGAZINE #4 free 78pp. newsprint standard size

By the title, you'd think you'd find the zine filled with Mod and garage punk, but that's not the case here. Never judge a zine by its cover, eh. Seems to cover the world of experimental jazz, hip-hop, techno and electronic music. Tons of record reviews, along with interviews with DJ3D, Third Eye Foundation, DJCAM, DJ Stratus, Joe Morris, Chocolate Weasel, Beattie-n-Davidson and Pressure Drop. [POB 161024 San Diego CA 92176] ***Chad Overdose***

NO DEPRESSION #17 $3.95 113pp. newsprint

I HATE COUNTRY! But if'n I didn't, then this'd definitely be the 'zine to get. Laid-out much like a well-established punk 'zine, this mag is packed, filled mostly with what I take to be indie / underground country, bluegrass and honky-tonk. I could be wrong, 'cause I reckon I don't know a dadgum thing about that thar kuntray muzak. If'n you're into this kinda music, then I reckon you best git down yonder to the local redneck store and git yourself a look see. [c/o 411 N. 46th St. Seattle, WA. 98103] ***C. O.***

PSYCHOBLAB #2 $2 27pp. standard size xerox

On the cover it says: "*A good zine gone bad.*" Well, I don't remember it ever being any good. I DO remember, however, that the issue before was free and now you've gotta pay $2 for it. The best part of this issue is the ridiculous poetry -- that made me laugh. Here's a taste: "*Homosapieus possessed in one fashion or another is a complete slave to the vagina...*" or how 'bout this: "*Excrement is mankind's greatest contribution...*" Maybe you'll laugh or you'll be "awakened." I think if there's something that everyone can enjoy, and not some "deep thinking" beatnik's thoughts in words and illustrations, it'd be a great zine. A good concept, but not for me. [POB 230181 Grand Rapids MI 49523-0181] ***C. O.***

SLANDER ZINE #4 free 28pp. xerox

One girl's [Empress Nicole] personal zine, filled with lots of talking out loud. Doesn't really cover the punk scene, it's geared more toward the mainstream and it's something that a younger audience would enjoy. This issue features an Afghan Whigs contest; a search-n-find game; movie, music and book reviews; opinions and more cut-n-paste than you can shake a stick at. This woman put a lot of hard work into this. [POB 66156 Roseville, MI 48066] ***Chad Overdose.***

TEMPLE OF STING #3 $2 30pp. newsprint standard size

This is pretty much centered around the girl's love for bees, and "Sting's" (ex-Police) conspiracy plan to take over the world. Also includes an interview with guitarist / singer from Acetone; music / zine reviews; articles [including one on Trephination (the act of drilling a hole in one's head to open up their psychic and mental abilities...yeah right.), plus some humor. [POB 357 Murray Hill Station, New York, NY 10156] ***Chad Overdose.***

News

ROCK GROUP MORPHINE'S SINGER DIES

ROME, ITALY - The lead singer of the Boston rock band Morphine, Mark Sandman, has died of a heart attack at a concert outside Rome, police said. Sandman, 46, collapsed on stage in front of several thousand spectators at a music festival outside Rome on Saturday night just before midnight. "We're devastated," band manager Deborah Klein said Sunday. "We don't even know what to say. We're all in shock." A doctor tried to revive him but failed, and Sandman was pronounced dead in an ambulance en route to a nearby hospital. Sandman, known for his deep, murky baritone, played bass, and wrote all of Morphine's songs. "His music was completely special and unique," Klein said in a telephone interview from Boston. "People loved him." She said that Sandman did not have a heart condition or any other major health problems. Morphine is a guitar-less trio which includes Dana Colley on saxophone and Billy Conway on drums. It started out playing loft parties and bars around Boston and Cambridge in the early 1990's and built a solid cult following. Morphine released 5 albums: "Good," "Cure for Pain," "Yes," "Like Swimming" and "B-Side." Morphine has gotten heavy airplay on college radio, and its songs have appeared on soundtracks for the films "Get Shorty," "Beautiful Girls" and "Postcards From America," as well as on the television series "Homicide: Life on the Street." The movie version of "Mod Squad" also included a song Sandman recorded with a friend, Chris Ballew from the group Presidents of the United States. The band had recently finished a live album, due out in October, and had nearly completed work on another project, Klein said. Sandman died on the second day of a 3-day music festival at the Giardini del Principe in Palestrina, 30 miles east of Rome. Festival promoter Flavio Maniri said Sunday's performances would be dedicated to Sandman. Klein said funeral arrangements for Sandman, who is survived by his parents, were pending.

MARK SANDMAN

KILL ROCK STARS SET TO MAKE HISTORY WITH UPCOMING RELEASE

Ronnie Spector was the legendary former lead singer of the ultimate girl group, The Ronettes, who were purveyors of such classic pop hits as "Walkin' in the Rain," "Baby I Love You," "The Best Part of Breaking Up," "Do I Love You" and the international #1 smash "Be My Baby." She is the only American vocalist to have been backed up by all four Beatles. She's recorded with Jimi Hendrix, Alice Cooper, Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band and had a Top 10 duet with Eddie Money; "Take Me Home Tonight" as well as many others. Even Billy Joel has written a song about her.

She's been busy throughout the 80's and 90's with a solo album on Columbia, HBO Specials, annual legendary Christmas shows in NY, her autobiography *Be My Baby: How I Survived Mascara, Miniskirts and Madness*, tons of television appearances on The Tonight Show, Entertainment Tonight, Grammy Legends, MTV, Late Night with Conan, Good Morning America, and David Letterman. Just recently, she performed for the leaders of the free world at President Clinton's request at the "Summit of the Eight."

Despite legal hassles and a whole lot of trouble not her own making, this woman is a survivor, the embodiment of rock-n-roll, and a great singer. Kill Rock Stars is proud to announce that on September 14, 1999 they will be releasing to the US, Ronnie Spector's first solo release since 1987. The EP is entitled She Talks to Rainbows. It's produced by Daniel Rey (Ramones, White Zombie, Misfits) and Joey Ramone, and includes a Joey Ramone song, a duet with Joey, a Johnny Thunders' song, and for the first time, her first ever recording of the song Brian Wilson wrote specifically for her, "Don't Worry Baby."

METROPOLIS MERGER

Metropolis Records announced a new relationship between themselves, Pendragon Recs and 21st Circuitry Recs.

The owners of 21st Circuitry and Pendragon indicated their interest to Metropolis to move on into other endeavors. Metropolis has a strong desire that the artists on these labels continue to be available to their fans, so the following arrangements were made:

Metropolis bought Pendragon, which will now operate as a wholly owned subsidiary of Metropolis. Artists currently on Pendragon, such as Gridlock and Imperative Reaction, will continue to be released under the Pendragon name. The distribution of Pendragon's back catalog will be assumed by Metropolis.

Metropolis also purchased the back catalog of Covenant, formerly on the 21st Circuitry label. Metropolis will reissue them in July on the Metropolis label. Remaining inventory from the 21st Circuitry label will be also distributed by Metropolis.

In this way, Metropolis has assured that the music of the artists that are on these 2 labels will continue to be available to fans across the nation.

BRAID CALLS IT QUITS

After 6 years, Braid will call it quits in August. The work involved has taken a toll on their creative output and, more importantly, on their friendship. Rather than sacrifice the care and respect they have for each other, the band has decided to put an end to what was pulling them apart. This also clears the way for them to pursue other musical and educational interests. Braid wants to thank everyone that helped them along the way, letting them sleep on their floors, talking to them or setting up one of the 530+ shows they played... Says the band, "If it's a bit upsetting, we're sorry, but we all feel that this is the only option that we could choose. We will all still be playing music, so be warned that you haven't seen the last of each of us." 2 upcoming Braid releases to look for:

Please Drive Faster 3-song 7" (August 10 - Polyvinyl)
Movie Music 2-CD set (January 2000 - Polyvinyl)

EX-COCTEAU TWIN TO PRODUCE AUTUMN'S NEXT ALBUM

Simon Raymonde, former member of the Cocteau Twins, has been pegged to produce the next album by Risk Recs' recording artists The Autumns. The Autumns, who will release an EP of all new material in the Fall, will follow the EP with a new album at the beginning of 2000. Simon's been an influential member of the Cocteau Twins since 1983 and has spent nearly 20 years working around the world, recording and releasing albums, touring with the band and performing on TV and video. The Cocteau Twins, who signed with Capitol in 1988, have enjoyed great success in the US, selling over one million records. Simon has since started an independent record label, "Bella Union," in England with his partner Robert Gutherie. He's also embarked on a new career as a record producer. It's no surprise that a new generation of bands / artists want to secure his services as a producer, as the Cocteau Twins were always highly regarded for their arrangements and unique sound. So far this year, Simon has produced the debut album from the Denver, CO-based band The Czars.

ADRIAN BELEW TOURING

Adrian Belew, best known as the frontman / vocalist / guitarist of King Crimson, is hitting the road in support of his new all-acoustically textured album, Salad Days (Thirsty Ear Recs).

In a career that's been marked by unusually varied settings (he toured last as a drummer!), guitar virtuoso Belew is shifting the focus towards his abilities as a singer and songwriter.

For longtime fans, this tour promises a chance to appreciate classics like, "Three of a Perfect Pair," in an entirely new light; newcomers will get an opportunity to check out Belew at his most approachable. He'll likely perform "Never Enough," a radio staple this past winter.

Although Belew's musicianship has been ubiquitous (i.e. being discovered by Frank Zappa, touring with Talking Heads, recording with Herbie Hancock, Paul Simon, NIN, David Bowie and Laurie Anderson), many new fans are in the process of discovering Belew's music. He's creating a "living room atmosphere" for this tour, emphasizing a personal presentation. (He'll also give a short preview of his next incarnation).

Opening for Belew will be The Irresponsibles, a Boston, MA band led by Peter Montgomery. Their latest effort, When Pigs Fly, was produced by Belew.

THE VEHICLE BIRTH CANCELS TOUR, BREAKS UP, GOES HOME

BOSTON, MA -- After years of playing together, The Vehicle Birth decided to break up, due to creative differences. The band was in the middle of a national tour when the decision was made. After careful thought, the band realized each individuals' development did not coincide with the group's overall direction. Consequently, they decided to call Portland their last stop and after the show, got in their van and headed directly back to Boston.

The band members have known each other so long, they obviously remain close friends. It's rumored that they'll play one last show in Boston before pursuing their individual interests.

DIO'S NEW ALBUM, MAGICA, WILL BE RELEASED ON SPITFIRE RECS

Spitfire Recs will release Dio's latest, Magica. It'll be recorded at Rumbo Studios and produced by Ronnie James Dio himself. Assisting on this latest crusade are Jeff Pilson (bass), Ansley Dunbar (drums), and Tracy G (guitars). Studio reports say Magica embraces Dio's classic heavy sound, akin to the legendary Holy Diver album. Look for it sometime in October. Spitfire will also reissue Angry Machines and Inferno: Last In Live to coincide with the release of Magica.

BROTHER SERIOUSLY INJURED – TOUR POSTPONED

A serious auto accident the evening of June 9, 1999 in the desert outside Needles, CA has forced FMA's Celtic rock act Brother to cancel all tour dates through the end of 1999. The band was returning from New Mexico when lead singer / guitarist Angus Richardson fell asleep at the wheel, causing their van to roll. All 4 band members, most of whom weren't wearing seatbelts, were ejected from the van and were injured. Angus, who broke his neck in the accident, remains in Intensive Care.

braid

Band

RELEASE DATES

JULY 13

59 Times The Pain End of the Millennium **[Burning Heart]**
Arch Enemy Burning Bridges **[Century Media]**
Coal Chamber Chamber Music **[Roadrunner]**
Covenant Theremin / Dreams of a Cryotank / Sequencer / Europa **(Metropolis)**
Deerhoof Holdypaw **[KRS / 5RC]**
The Gadjits Wish We Never Met **[Hellcat]**
Goodbye Mr. McKenzie Good Deeds & Dirty Rags **[Razor & Tie]**
Hypocrisy Hypocrisy Destroys Wacken (video) **[Nuclear Blast America]**
Paul Jones Pucker Up Buttercup **[Fat Possum]**
John Mayall Padlock on the Blues **[Cleopatra]**
Scotty Moore The Guitar That Changed The World **[Razor & Tie]**
Orange 9MM Pretend I'm Human **[Ng]**
Chris Rock Bigger & Blacker **[DreamWorks]**
Sinergy Beware the Heavens **[Nuclear Blast America]**
Therion The Crowning of Atlantis (ep) **[Nuclear Blast America]**
DJ Josh Wink Profound Sounds Vol. #1 Josh Wink **[Columbia]**
V/A Josh's Blair Witch Mix **[Chapter III]**

JULY 20

Barcelona Simon BASIC **[March]**
Decoded Feedback EVOLution **(Metropolis)**
The Evil Tambourines Library Nation **[Sub Pop]**
Gardenian Soulburner **[Nuclear Blast America]**
Icicle Works Best of the Icicle Works **[Beggars Banquet]**
Nighthawks Still Wild **[Ruf]**
Pop Factory s/t **[Buffalo Fire]**
Elvis Presley Artist of the Century 3-CD box set **[RCA]**
Marky Ramone & the Intruders tba **[Rounder]**
Walter Trout & The Free Radicals Livin' Every Day **[Ruf]**
V/A Live in Einhoven '98 (video) **[Nuclear Blast America]**

JULY 21

Metal Church Masterpiece **[Nuclear Blast America]**
My Superhero Station One **[Risk]**
Primal Fear Jaws of Life **[Nuclear Blast America]**

JULY 27

Demolition Doll Rods TLA **(Matador)**
Machine Head The Burning Bed **[Roadrunner]**
Nerves New Animal **[Thrill Jockey]**
The Pietasters Awesome Mix Tape #6 **[Hellcat]**

AUGUST 3

Inoj Ready For The World **[So So Def / Columbia]**
Telegraph Melts Ilium **[Absolutely Kosher]**

AUGUST 10

Braid Please Drive Faster 7" **(Polyvinyl)**
Dark Tranquillity Projector **[Century Media]**
Mark Lizotte Soul Lost Companion **[Mammoth]**
Naked Raygun Basement Screams / Throb Throb / All Rise / Jettison / Understand / Raygun...Naked Raygun **[Quarterstick]**
Sozzi Life Goes On **[Columbia]**
Supersuckers The Greatest Rock-N-Roll Band in the World **[Sub Pop]**
Watts s/t **[Estrus]**
V/A Torchbearers **[Risk]**

AUGUST 17

Bombshell Rocks Street Art Gallery **[Burning Heart]**
Continental Drifters Vermilion **[Razor & Tie]**
Styles Of Beyond 2000 Fold **[Hi Ho / Mammoth]**
Super Chikan tba **[Fat Possum]**

AUGUST 24

5ive Style Miniature Portraits **[Sub Pop]**
Marshall Crenshaw tba **[Razor & Tie]**
EYC I Feel It **[Red Ant]**
Fireball Ministry Ou Est La Rock **[Bongload]**
Hellacopters 7" **[Sub Pop]**
The Mopes Accident Waiting to Happen **[Lookout!]**
Murder City Devils 7" **[Sub Pop]**
the Sheila Divine New Parade **[Roadrunner]**
Toshi Reagon tba **[Razor & Tie]**
White Skull Tales from the North **[Nuclear Blast America]**
V/A Tribute to Accept **[Nuclear Blast America]**

AUGUST 31

The Madd Rapper Tell 'Em Why U Madd **[Crazy Cat / Columbia]**
Megadeth Risk **[Capitol]**

SEPTEMBER 3

Guided By Voices Do The Collapse **[TVT]**

SEPTEMBER 7

Fu Manchu King of the Road **[Mammoth]**
The Wiseguys The Antidote **[Hi Ho / Mammoth]**
V/A KCRW "Morning Becomes Eclectic" **[Mammoth]**

SEPTEMBER 14

Agnostic Front tba **[Epitaph]**
Antarctica tba **[File 13]**
Dust Brothers Best of the Dust Brothers **[Hi Ho / Mammoth]**
Franklin s/t **[Tree]**
Hammerfall At the End of the Rainbow (single) **[Nuclear Blast America]**
Hammerfall s/t (video) **[Nuclear Blast America]**
H-Blockx Fly Eyes **[Risk]**
Cledus T. Judd tba **[Razor & Tie]**
Liberator Worldwide Delivery **[Burning Heart]**
Bob Log III tba **[Fat Possum]**
Mr. T Experience Alcatraz **[Lookout!]**
Satanic Surfers Going Nowhere Fast **[Burning Heart]**
Splendid Have You Got A Name For It **[Mammoth]**
Zeke tba **[Epitaph]**
V/A Metal Dreams **[Nuclear Blast America]**

SEPTEMBER 21

Chris Cornell Euphoria Morning **[Interscope]**
Franklin s/t **[Tree]**
Promise Ring Very Emergency **[Jade Tree]**

SEPTEMBER 28

Guano Apes Proud Like A God **[BMG]**
The Get Up Kids Something To Write Home About **[Vagrant]**
The Hang Ups Second Story **[Restless]**

CONTACTS

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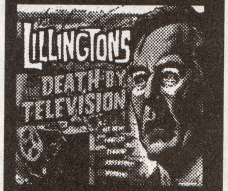
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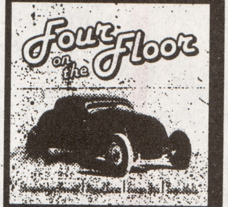
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- **AMERICAN MARS/LATE** A stark, if not quieter, approach to alternative guitar pop. Grounded in the chill of post-punk , the band's music also employs an embracing warmth that is both calming and sensual. CD $11
- **BOB THE SINGING BASS PLAYER/WAITING FOR GODARD** A legend in the Detroit scene, Bob has compiled two bands and also plays solo on this multi-style CD which touches on environmental rock as well as longing for love. CD $6
- **EX-IGNOTA/JAMMIN' ON THE ONE** First full-length from this underground California group; fast raging hardcore songs as well as somber instrumental symphonies. 15 energetic experimental performances that excite and innovate. CD $8
- **KNEE DEEP SHAG/INTUITION** Great groove, tasty funk, soulful vocals. One of Michigan's premier bands. CD $11
- **KUNG FU BOB DIESEL/TUNES FROM TRAILERVILLE** Kung Fu Diesel's bass player Bobby Webb lays it down on a bunch of cover tunes including "One Way or Another", "Blister In the Sun", "Hungry Like the Wolf" and 7 more. CD $13
- **KUNG FU JASON DIESEL/TWANG** Kung Fu Diesel's guitar player Jason Peek rips with covers of "Take This Job and Shove It", "Act Naturally", "Bobbie McGee" and 8 others. CD $13
- **LICKETY CLIT** Debut recorded with tongues firmly in cheek and minds fully in the gutter. Features former members of Detroit's all female trio Inside Out. (Evil Eye Records) CD $11
- **LOOMER/WORLD TIPPED BLUE** First release from this bliss pop band. Combines lush vocal harmonies, flowing melodies over a thick tapestry of guitars and synthesizers while exploring the pop side of sonic experimentation. CD $11
- **LOVEMASTERS/PUSHERMAN OF LOVE** Flaming Groovie-ish, MC5ish underground cult icons' 3rd release. Ricky Rat from Trash Brats on guitar. CD $11
- **PURPLEFLY** Jazzy funk to rock to pure poetic pop. "Phat and phunky with just enough phlash and phury..." *Glass Eye* CD $11

COMPS!!!!

- **MOTOR CD** 20 Bands/songs from the Motor City. Award winning; ranges from industrial/techno to straight out rock, pop, and also heavier stuff. Features Skinhorse, Forge, Twitch, Fathers of the Id. CD $12
- **POP OD: THE SONGS OF IGGY POP** 23 acts pay tribute to the world's Forgotten Boy! Not carbon-copy covers, all styles of bands recast Iggy into their own styles - pop, rap, noise, ambient, industrial, spoken word. Classic Stooges tunes and recent Iggy tunes. (Static Records) CD $12

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